EMPIRES OF THE WORLD

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

A HISTORICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

JAMES FRANCIS LEPREE, EDITOR
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THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

A Historical Encyclopedia

Volume I

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Empires of the World

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Preface

The Byzantine Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia is a remarkable resource for high school and undergraduate students as well as for general readers interested in the Byzantine Empire. The encyclopedia provides the means for readers to investigate the history and culture of the empire that served as a symbol of Christian culture for over 1,000 years. The encyclopedia's two volumes contain almost 220 entries written by expert contributors and organized into the following eight topical sections:

- Government and Politics
- Organization and Administration
- Individuals
- Groups and Organizations
- Key Events
- Military
- Objects and Artifacts
- Key Places

Each section begins with an overview essay followed by a wide array of entries designed specifically for a diversity of reader interests. The topic entries are alphabetized within each specific section. Each entry contains "See also" cross-references to related entries in that and other sections and concludes with a current bibliography of important related information resources, both print and electronic. The encyclopedia also provides a table of contents permitting easy access to areas of specific interest, a general introduction introducing readers to the general context of Byzantine history, and a chronology of important events. Brief sidebars complement many entries, providing useful and relevant information. Following the thematic sections are numerous primary document selections that will be useful for students in preparing projects and presentations and for general readers in becoming acquainted with important sources and with important events and personages of Byzantine history. The encyclopedia also includes a select bibliography of useful primary and secondary sources that provide readers with access to the best past and present Byzantine scholarship. Finally, *The Byzantine Empire* includes a glossary of important terms in Byzantine history that are used in the entries and that may be unfamiliar to student and nonspecialist readers, as well as a general subject index that provides more in-depth access to names and terms mentioned in the text of the entries.

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Introduction

FROM ROMAN TO BYZANTINE

Byzantine history is a continuation of Roman history. The empire that we refer to as "Byzantine" today was called "Roman" by those who ruled and inhabited it. Roman political, social, and cultural institutions remained at work in the Byzantine Empire down to its fall in the 15th century. In the 17th century, scholars in the West began to refer to the period of Roman history after Constantine as something different, designating this "Byzantine," a reference to Byzantion (Latin, Byzantium), which was the classical predecessor of Constantinople and often a synonym for it. This terminology was influenced by a well-established *Western* anti-Byzantine bias, whose roots were in the medieval period, which viewed the West as superior. This terminology was useful in the attempt of these scholars to distance Byzantium from this Western heritage.

Fortunately, historical study today has moved beyond medieval and early modern biases to recognize connections and continuities, something already apparent to astute observers in the past. The great 18th-century British historian Edward Gibbon, in his classic study, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* told the story of the Roman Empire from its high point in the second century CE down to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. He well understood that this was all *Roman* history. Yet, the terms "Byzantine" and "Byzantium" have since generally been adopted by modern historians to denote the *Christian* empire that existed from the 4th to the 15th centuries CE in contrast to the *pagan* Roman Empire that preceded it. Still, it must be noted that the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire always called themselves "*Rhomaioi*," the Greek word for "Romans," and even the Ottoman Turks called their Orthodox Christian subjects by the name that they called themselves, "Rum" (or "Roman"), until the early 20th century. Byzantine emperors understood themselves to be Roman emperors and heirs of the imperial tradition of Augustus.

And so, modern scholars have generally adopted the term "Byzantine" to designate the empire's long history from the 4th through the 15th centuries CE. Scholars refer to the empire's early period from the fourth through sixth centuries CE both as the early Byzantine period and also as the late Roman Empire interchangeably, making this age a notable transitional period, where the foundations of the Byzantine civilization were established.

FOUNDATIONS OF BYZANTINE CIVILIZATION: ROMAN LAW AND INSTITUTIONS, GREEK LANGUAGE, AND CHRISTIANITY

The foundations that underlay the development of Byzantium are Roman law and governmental institutions, the Greek language, and Christianity.

After the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, Greek culture became dominant in the eastern Mediterranean. When the Roman Empire expanded, absorbing the Greek kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean in the second and first centuries BCE, Rome absorbed this region but was, in turn, conquered by Greek culture, as the Roman poet Horace put it. The Romans learned Greek. The Latin language, dominant in the western Mediterranean, never displaced Greek in the east.

Christianity emerged as the dominant religion of the Roman world in the early Byzantine period, which is also the late Roman period, when the state was Christianized after the reign of Emperor Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE). Constantine founded the city of Constantinople, which became the "New Rome" of the eastern Mediterranean and the capital of the Byzantine Empire. These events, the triumph of Christianity and the construction of a Roman capital in the Greek east, marked the beginning of a new era.

From a modern historical perspective, we can see the starting point of Byzantine history in the "crisis" of the third century CE, which was marked by epidemics, rampant inflation, famine, civil war, and invasions by Germanic tribes and Persian armies. New circumstances provoked by the crisis of the third century found their expression in the administrative reforms of Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine the Great. Diocletian carried out a major reorganization of the whole state administration. Constantine continued his work of reforming the state's administrative organization, which, in its major characteristics, existed throughout the Byzantine Empire.

The crisis of the third century CE was especially disastrous in the western part of the empire. The eastern portion of the Roman Empire was more resilient, benefiting from greater economic resources and from the strength of the new capital city. It was precisely these characteristics that facilitated the development of the empire. The Roman Empire lost its hold on its western territories by the fifth century CE, but the territories in the east survived into this early Byzantine period.

The emperor reigned from Constantinople and exercised power through a complex state administration and bureaucracy and a vast military force, all of which were foundations of Byzantine imperial power. Yet, the Roman concept of the sovereignty of the people also remained. Constantinople, like Rome, had a senate, and the city's inhabitants played an important role in acclaiming and supporting emperors (and sometimes even in toppling them). The emperor was not only expected to manage the civil administration, the army, and the people, but also to take care of them. Failure to do so could well mean the end of a reign. In addition, as Christian rulers, the emperors had to be mindful of supporting the church administration and adhering to and promoting correct theological positions. Thus, holding power was truly a challenging endeavor. While emperors readily promoted the idea that they were placed on the

throne by God, the working reality of their power was far more complex and often messy.

As heir to Rome, the Byzantine Empire, in its early period, asserted a belief that it had claim on lands that had previously belonged to the Roman Empire, and it justified conquests with this rationale. Nonetheless, the empire's economic, social, and political development after the early period led to new approaches to fiscal, social, and administrative organization. The Byzantine Empire was a dynamic state that experienced constant change and innovation, despite antiquated and inaccurate views that the empire was stagnant and unchanging.

Throughout the empire's history, the church administration and its leaders wielded great influence, marking an important distinction between Roman (pagan/non-Christian) and Byzantine (Christian Roman) history. With their influential positions, Christian bishops and monastic leaders were often in conflict with the emperor. Despite such occurrences, there was a general collaboration between state and church administrations: the Byzantine Empire was an Orthodox Christian state. The emperor acted to support the church, promote Christianity, and confront any danger that threatened "correct teaching," which is what *Orthodoxia* means in Greek. Such threats included heretical ideas and those who professed them, but imperial opponents could also be designated as hostile to Christianity. The emperor was a patron and protector of the church, but he was not a bishop or priest, and so, his influence on the church was great, but not absolute.

The emperor ran the civil administration, oversaw the military, protected the church, and guided the people. To help in this enormously challenging combination of responsibilities, emperors used public ceremonies to manifest the sanctity and authority of imperial power, expressing the idea that the emperor was chosen by God and approved by the military, the civil administration, and the people. On public processions and at the games in the Hippodrome, the people cheered according to scripts provided by chanters. During private ceremonies, the emperor's elevated status was always emphasized, with tight controls enforced on the movement and the speech of all those in his presence. Byzantine ceremonial tradition had its roots in the Roman Empire and even deeper roots in the Persian Empire, whose ceremonial influence had already begun with Alexander's conquest.

Greek was the dominant language of Byzantium, and the empire was responsible for the preservation of the classical Greek heritage of literature that is extant today, including the great Athenian playwrights, historians, and poets. The empire also contributed to Greek literature through many works of history and other genres as well as volumes of Christian literature, including theological texts and lives of saints. Byzantium carefully preserved the cultural treasures of antiquity and built upon them, creating a new synthesis of Christian and classical culture.

The heritage of Greek thought is evident in the Christian theology that emerged in the early Byzantine period. Christian theologians paired biblical understanding with aspects of the classical philosophical tradition to articulate Christian concepts and establish the "correct teaching" of Christian dogma. For many centuries, Byzantium was the greatest cultural and educational center in the Mediterranean world and, in

fact, the Renaissance in Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries greatly benefited from the work of Byzantine scholars in Constantinople.

With its effective administrative organization and highly developed fiscal system, the Byzantine Empire wielded enormous financial resources. Its wealth was a basis of power and prestige, and the state's financial strength, at least to outside observers at the time, seemed almost endless. Unfortunately, this was not the case in reality. Byzantine monetary success depended primarily on the productivity of peasant agricultural labor and on the effective implementation of its fiscal and civil administration, both of which were disrupted by wars, both foreign and civil, which is one reason that emperors often opted to pay enemies off rather than mobilize armies to fight them. It was not that Byzantium was weak, though the medieval West would regularly accuse emperors of being "effeminate"; such perceptions were the result of a major cultural clash between a monetized Byzantium and an undermonetized, overly martial West. Emperors were strong and also fiscally prudent—it was often more cost effective to pay rather than fight, though the empire also turned to the latter strategy when needed.

IMPERIAL CONSTANTINOPLE

Relocation of the Roman state's administrative center to the east was partially inspired by the economic power of the more densely inhabited eastern part of the empire. There were also important strategic reasons. Germanic and other peoples were putting pressure on the Danube frontier in the north, and Persia was a constant threat in the east. Constantine, the empire's first Christian ruler, founded his new city on the Bosporus, which absorbed the existing Greek city of Byzantion (Byzantium in Latin) and became the new imperial capital. The foundation began in 324 CE, immediately after his victory over his last political rival, which unified the Roman Empire under Constantine, both east and west. On May 11, 330 CE, Constantinople, "the city of Constantine," was inaugurated. It was the new Rome in the east in contrast to "old" Rome in the west. There are few cities in the world whose foundation had such a great importance for world history as Constantinople. The strategic wisdom of the location is clear. The city is situated on the Bosporus, the meeting point of Asia and Europe, surrounded by sea on three sides: the Bosporus to the east, the Golden Horn to the north, and the Sea of Marmora to the south; it is accessible by land only from the west. At the same time, it controlled traffic between Europe and Asia, as well as dominating access between the Mediterranean and Black Seas. For a millennium, Constantinople was the economic, political, and cultural center of the Byzantine Empire.

Whereas the population of Rome was in decline throughout much of Byzantine history, Constantinople's was on the rise. Within a century of its foundation, Constantinople overtook Rome in population. In the sixth century CE, Constantinople approached half a million inhabitants, whereas Rome had declined to less than 50,000. This "New Rome" was modeled on the old, with both built on seven hills, for example, and Constantinople even began to outshine Rome. Constantinople claimed that the privileges of the older sibling had transferred to the younger. Constantine made the

city a capital to behold, embellishing it with magnificent buildings and churches and with monuments collected from all parts of the empire. From the beginning, Constantinople was a Roman city, with a Greek-speaking population, and was dominated by Christianity—that is, it reflected the foundations of Byzantium.

CONSTANTINE AND CHRISTIANITY

A commonly recurring question about Constantine is the nature of his conversion to Christianity: Was he indifferent, supporting Christianity for mostly political reasons; was his conversion one of profound belief; or was it something in between? As emperor, it certainly was the case that practical political goals were critical for Constantine. The empire's population and, more important, the army, were primarily non-Christian, so Constantine had to act with some care. It is notable, however, that the transition of the political center toward the east possibly made a pro-Christian attitude more easily established through a new city, one which had no pagan past, rather than one that had the longest and most celebrated in the empire's history, that of Rome itself. The question is even more complex when one considers the extent of Constantine's understanding of the new faith and also the influence of those close to him, such as his Christian mother, Helen, or his father's devotion to Sol Invictus ("the Unconquered Son"), whose birthday was celebrated on December 25. Whatever position one takes on this question, what is evident is that by 312 CE with his victory over his western rival at Rome, Constantine began supporting Christianity, giving property to the Christian Church and influence to Christian leaders, who, for the first time, had the ear of a Roman emperor.

Constantine supported the Christian Church but was immediately confronted with a problem that previous emperors never had to face. Theological differences split the religion's leadership and organization into competing factions. The emperor sought to "fix" the problem by calling meetings of bishops to work out a consensus of belief and establish the correct ruling. Such efforts were further examples of how the early Byzantine period was distinguished from its Roman predecessor.

A "watershed" manifestation of this imperial Christian effort was the Council of Nicaea, which Constantine summoned in 325 CE. This meeting was the first in a series of church councils deemed "ecumenical," meaning universal, that were to establish the foundations of Christian belief, theology, and church organization, from the first held at Nicaea to the seventh also at Nicaea in 787 CE. It is important to consider that all seven of these councils took place near Constantinople (like Nicaea) or in the capital itself, again emphasizing the importance of the Byzantine Empire for the development of Christianity. None of these councils took place in Rome or in the west. The councils clarified correct teaching and condemned what was deemed heretical, that is, false teaching. The emperor convoked the council and influenced its discussions and decisions. Constantine set the precedent that emperors, and not bishops, summoned Ecumenical Councils. Church and state were intertwined, but this meant that theological divisions or disagreements over church leadership were now matters of grave importance for the state and required imperial attention.

The church was not a department of state, but the integration of church and state could easily make it appear so to modern observers. The power of the state supported the church, whose wealth increased throughout the empire, but it also threatened to overshadow it, with emperors seeking to ensure particular theological policies or positions. This collaboration of the state in religious discussion, the intersection of political and ecclesiastical interests, was already evident during Constantine's reign. Christianity and Byzantine imperial power would be inseparable from this time out, with the briefest exception during the short reign of Constantine's last descendent, Emperor Julian (r. 361–363 CE). Julian had hoped to stem the advance of Christianity and restore the empire to its traditional non-Christian religious foundations. He attempted this, however, by shifting state funding from the Christian Church to a revived pagan religious establishment and by modeling the pagan religious hierarchy after that of the existing and effective Christian organization. While Julian was truly devoted to classical culture and philosophy, his hostility to the new religion may also have been in some way connected to its association with the family of Constantine, which was responsible for the murder of his closest family members when he was a child; these murders were committed to eliminate competitors for the throne and to ensure that only the sons of Constantine would rule. Julian died unexpectedly, while on campaign against the Persians, and this final effort to stem the Christianization of the empire died with him.

ERA OF JUSTINIAN: POWER AND RENEWAL

The Christianization of the empire was a central characteristic of the early Byzantine period as was the challenge of Germanic incursions on the Rhine and Danube frontiers; attacks by nomadic peoples from the steppe region, most notably the Huns; and increased hostility from the Persian Empire of the Sassanid Dynasty, which ruled from the third to the seventh centuries CE. This combination of challenges led to the empire's loss of its western territories, from Britain to Italy, in the fifth century CE. But the east remained intact, with the imperial capital of Constantinople, newly fortified with a massive land wall, emerging as the Mediterranean region's premier city, eclipsing all other challengers in size and wealth.

The reign of Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) was a culmination of many aspects of the early Byzantine period, which the emperor presented as a restoration or renewal of the empire. This was a period of great cultural achievements in literature and the arts and massive building projects, including the magnificent and massive domed cathedral, Hagia Sophia, the most celebrated church in Byzantine history. This was also a time of important administrative reforms, including the empire's most influential codification of Roman law, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. Finally, it was a time of great military power. Justinian achieved the reconquest of much of the western territory lost to Germanic tribes over the past century, including North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, and portions of southern Spain. By Justinian's death in 565 CE, the Byzantine Empire bordered nearly the entire Mediterranean Sea, but Justinian made no effort to retake the empire's former territory of Gaul (modern France), held by the powerful Franks,

or the bulk of Spain, held by the Visigoths, or Britain, which was much too far to restore imperial control.

Like his imperial predecessors, Justinian was active in the religious sphere, acting as the defender of Christianity, which included the persecution of paganism, again building on the Christianization of the state that marked the early Byzantine or late Roman period. Justinian faced a much more difficult problem trying to establish Christian unity by eliminating dissenting theological positions, which ultimately proved impossible, despite decades of efforts and many strategies, from dialogue, to holding the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 553 CE, to persecution. Despite Justinian's remarkable reign and many achievements, Christian theological unity remained a permanent issue with church organizations in Syria and Egypt leaning in a different theological direction than that of Rome. Constantinople struggled for centuries to achieve unity in the empire between these Western and Eastern theological positions.

MIGRATIONS AND TRANSFORMATION

As mentioned, the Roman frontiers on the Rhine River in the west, on the Danube River in the north, and facing the Persian Empires in the east were gravely challenged in the early Byzantine period. In the north and west, Germanic peoples and sometimes nomadic tribes from the steppe region were drawn to these frontiers due to conflicts with neighboring peoples, issues of climate change and environmental challenge, and the attractiveness of the wealth of the Roman Empire.

Pressure on the frontier in the late fourth century CE led to its collapse in the west, with Germanic tribes seizing control of the empire's western territories in the fifth century CE. The city of Rome was sacked and plundered by the Goths in 410 CE and again by the Vandals in 455 CE, while the nomadic Huns rampaged throughout the empire and also threatened the city of Rome. In 476 CE, a Germanic leader named Odoacer deposed a nominal Roman emperor in the west and proclaimed himself king of Italy, an unprecedented act, the validity of which was completely rejected by the reigning emperor in Constantinople.

In the sixth century CE, Emperor Justinian directly challenged this Germanic power, reconquering much of the lost Mediterranean territories. Much of Italy, however, was lost to another Germanic challenger, the Lombards, soon after Justinian's death in 565 CE, though North Africa and Byzantine Spain remained imperial territory until the Arab conquests of the seventh century CE.

These Arab invasions hit the empire at a particularly precarious time. Since the third century CE, the Roman Empire and the Persian Empire of the Sassanid Dynasty had endured repeated conflicts. These hot and cold wars culminated in a massive struggle that spanned the first quarter of the seventh century CE, leaving the Persian Empire defeated and Byzantium victorious but completely drained of resources. It was precisely at this moment that Arab armies, united by the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632 CE) and the religion of Islam and forged into a powerful military force, burst on the scene. The Persian Empire was overwhelmed and conquered, while Byzantium

lost vast and wealthy territory, losing its eastern provinces (Syria to Egypt), North Africa, and Spain, with Anatolia (the Asian region of modern Turkey) now threatened by Arab raids.

While the empire's eastern territories were reduced to Anatolia, its remaining western territories were further reduced in this period as Slavic tribes and a powerful nomadic Turkic people known as the Bulgars occupied much of the Balkans. In time, the Bulgars were completely "Slavicized" and lost their Turkic and nomadic roots. Imperial territory, which in the sixth century CE had spanned much of the Mediterranean, was now reduced to a fraction of its former self and faced possible extinction.

MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD

The cataclysm of the seventh century CE brought the early Byzantine period to an end and marked the beginning of the middle Byzantine period (7th to 12th centuries CE). The empire was in truly dire straits. Yet, it did not collapse. The imperial idea remained, the imperial capital proved impregnable to all invaders, and the state's ability to adjust to new circumstances and revise strategies to survive was dynamic.

Coming from the empire's North African provinces, Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) seized power in Constantinople and addressed the challenges. He brought the Persian war to a successful conclusion, but the empire's resources were exhausted and he struggled mightily against the unexpected arrival of Arab armies. Yet, he established a dynasty that would survive much of the century and that kept the empire alive. The Heraclian century was turbulent for the family itself, but these rulers weathered the storm, despite a vastly reduced tax base and incessant military activity on all fronts. Moreover, theological controversy also raged as Constantinople continued to seek ways to harmonize various positions and to keep the Western and Eastern churches together.

This theological controversy became even more turbulent in the following century, when a new dynasty, the Syrian or Isaurian Dynasty (717–802 CE), embraced the idea that religious images, or icons, were violations of the Bible's second commandment against "graven images," believing that this religious error had caused the imperial defeats of the past century. The dynasty initiated the period of Iconoclasm ("icon breaking"), when the emperors sought to root out and destroy *religious* images, allowing only imperial images, which makes Byzantine iconoclasm distinct from that of Islam, which prohibits all such images. The dynasty successfully held firm against Balkan and Anatolian challenges but ran out of heirs by the end of the eighth century CE. A new dynasty revived Iconoclasm in the ninth century CE, after a string of Byzantine defeats, but the controversy was finally put to rest in 842 CE. Henceforth, emperors and the church were in agreement that icons were an essential component of Orthodox religious life and worship.

With this religious controversy resolved and church and state again acting in greater harmony, and the state guided by strong leadership and an effective administrative apparatus, the empire began to expand. This expansion largely overlaps with

the reign of the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056 CE), which was founded by Basil I (r. 867–886 CE), a peasant from the Balkans, who migrated to Constantinople to find opportunity. His was a classic "rags to riches" story that led to the imperial throne. In the course of the dynasty's reign, Byzantium extended its borders against the weakening Abbasid Caliphate in the east, restoring control over all of Anatolia and into the Caucasus and northern Syria. The empire defeated the Bulgarian and Slavic kingdoms in the Balkans and restored the Danube as the Byzantine frontier. In the Mediterranean, Byzantium took Crete and Cyprus from Arab control and greatly strengthened its position in southern Italy.

Emperors of the Macedonian Dynasty wielded great authority abroad, but they were also mindful of good governance in the empire. This is reflected in a reorganization of Roman law, which was completed in the ninth century CE, a project reminiscent of Justinian's great work in the sixth century CE. It was also during this dynasty that emperors issued laws protecting small landowners, referred to as "the poor" in the legislation, from encroachment by "the powerful," who were absorbing their lands. This legislation promoted the idea of the emperor's concern for justice, but it also revealed their attentiveness to the roots of military power, since the lands lost to "the powerful" may have weakened the army by seizing lands assigned to provincial soldiers as partial compensation for their service.

Whereas the empire's human and fiscal resources had been wholly consumed by the military challenges of the seventh and eighth centuries CE, such resources could be diverted to increased cultural activity in the following centuries. Architectural monuments, works of art and literature, and institutions of higher learning all revived during a "renaissance" of culture and learning during the rule of the Macedonian Dynasty. Emperors became patrons of scholarship, art, and literature. The empire not only preserved the classical works of ancient Greek literature, which we have today, but it also contributed important works of art and literature.

In the 9th and 10th centuries CE, many Slavic peoples in the orbit of the Byzantine Empire, including the Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians, were converted to Orthodox Christianity, thanks to the efforts of the Byzantine state and its missionaries. Of these missionaries, the most celebrated today are the "Apostles to the Slavs," the brothers Cyril and Methodius, who spread Orthodox Christianity to the Moravians in central Europe and invented a script for the Slavic language, the descendant of which is called "Cyrillic" today and is used to write Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and other languages.

Byzantine power reached a zenith in the 11th century under Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE). The empire's armies were triumphant in the east and west, the treasury was full, and imperial power was projected by a highly centralized administrative structure. Yet, the half century between the death of Emperor Basil II and the rise of Emperor Alexius in 1081 witnessed military defeat, rebellion, and civil strife. There was a virtual dissolution of imperial power as a consequence of ineffective leadership, policies that triggered financial trouble and insurrection, and the appearance of formidable and simultaneous threats around the empire: the Normans in the west, the nomadic Pechenegs in the north (the Balkan frontier), and the Seljuq Turks in the

east. In spring 1071, the Normans, with papal approval, conquered Bari, eliminating the last Byzantine possession in Italy, and set their sights on an invasion of the Byzantine Empire. At the other end of the empire, in summer 1071, Turkish Sultan Alp Arslan (r. 1063–1072) defeated the Byzantine army at Manzikert, capturing Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes (r. 1068–1071) and opening Anatolia to Turkish incursions, marking the beginning of the Turkification of Anatolia.

It was in this anarchic period that Alexius Comnenus became a general, at only 18 years of age. He proved his leadership ability and, at 24, maneuvered to seize the throne on April 1, 1081, and establish the Comnenus Dynasty (1081–1185), which provided stability and firm leadership to the imperial throne.

Alexius's reign (r. 1081–1118) relied on an alliance of leading families, often bound by marriages. In this family diplomacy, Alexius was guided by his mother, Anna Dalassena, who arranged marriages for her children and zealously opposed any who stood in the way of her family's power. Anna had arranged Alexius's marriage to Irene, which united the Comnenus and Ducas families. Alexius relied heavily on family members for political and military posts and on his mother, into whose care he entrusted the administration, when he was on campaign. Rather than rely on eunuchs as previous emperors had done, Alexius's palace was managed by his family. This emphasis on rule through family during the Comnenus Dynasty was a break with the approach to governing that was in place through the early and middle Byzantine period.

Alexius was able to check Pecheneg power in the Balkans and then focus his energy on the imminent threat of the Catholic Normans as the most serious danger to the empire and, after much struggle, stemmed the tide. This required an agreement with Venice that brought Venetian naval support against the Normans in return for tax-free trade in the empire, a boon to the economy of the Italian republic. Italian city-states increasingly began to look to Byzantium and the east for economic gain, often at the empire's expense, which became a source of increasing tension between east and west.

To confront Turkish control of Anatolia, Alexius turned to the papacy to request military support for his effort. Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099) was in support of a military venture but not one limited to operations in Anatolia. Rather, the pope aimed at a conquest of the Holy Land. And so, the Crusades were born, largely to the detriment of Byzantium.

The two branches of Christianity, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, officially split in 1054, but it was this era of the Crusades that transformed this theological dispute into a permanent cultural divide. The First, Second, and Third Crusades hurled Catholic armies through Constantinople, each causing greater tension and increasing threat levels to the empire, even as their publicly acknowledged aim was the Holy Land. Crusader ideology was foreign to the Orthodox world, and Western soldiers and clergy progressively made the Catholic West appear hostile to Orthodoxy. This view was confirmed by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, when a Catholic crusading army assaulted and conquered Constantinople, imposing a Catholic emperor and patriarch on the city, and carving up the empire.

LATE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The Comnenus Dynasty ended in 1185 and, with its demise, a vacuum in leadership emerged. The empire struggled with internal conflicts and rebellion. The empire's control over its territory began unraveling as Cyprus broke away from Constantinople and Bulgaria once again emerged as an intendent kingdom in the Balkans. This weakness was capitalized on by the assaulting crusader army in 1204, led by the Venetian ruler Enrico Dandolo. After taking Constantinople, the Crusaders divided the empire among the various Crusader leaders, each of whom ruled former Byzantine territory independently, paying nominal attention to the new Catholic emperor whom they had appointed at Constantinople. Venice itself was careful to take control of Aegean islands and other coastal territories that benefited its commercial prosperity. In addition to a Latin emperor, the Crusaders imposed a Catholic bishop on the city, and the Catholic liturgy was presided over in the city's great cathedral, Hagia Sophia.

Byzantine leaders and church figures fled to the provinces in eastern Greece and northwest and northeast Anatolia, establishing bases of operation, which both competed against one another and resisted the Crusaders. It was one of these states, that of Nicaea in northwest Anatolia, that most effectively confronted this Western Catholic ascendancy.

Michael Palaeologus (r. 1259–1282), a Nicene general and then emperor, wrested control of Constantinople from the Crusaders in 1261, after 57 years of Latin rule, and established the empire's last family in power, the Palaeologan Dynasty (1259–1453). Michael then struggled for decades to stem a Western Christian threat of a second conquest, while restoring the city, like a new Constantine, after decades of Crusader neglect. Hagia Sophia was rededicated as an *Orthodox* cathedral, where Michael was recrowned, at the traditional site of the empire's coronation ceremony, despite having already been crowned at Nicaea.

Michael VIII Palaeologus was the last Byzantine emperor whose armies and diplomacy were notable. The empire lacked the resources to maintain this level of international engagement and it increasingly looked to the West for financial support, granting trade concessions and land to Italian city-states, which gained greater economic control of the region. The empire also outsourced its naval operations to Italian fleets and relied more and more on mercenaries in its army, who proved both expensive and unreliable.

While the borders of the empire during the Palaeologan Dynasty were reduced to little more than Greece, some Aegean islands, and modest lands in Anatolia, Byzantine cultural activity was still significant, including great works of art and important works of scholarship and historical study. The city of Mistra, near Sparta in southern Greece, became a new intellectual and cultural center, while Byzantine scholars inspired Renaissance humanists in Italy, a connection that is often overlooked. The classical Greek texts that were cherished by Renaissance intellectuals came from the Byzantine Empire. Moreover, its religious influence continued to be important, particularly in Russia, which looked to Constantinople for religious leadership into the 15th century, though this was severed when Emperor John VIII Palaeologus

(r. 1425–1448) agreed to a union of the churches, essentially accepting Catholic ascendancy over the Orthodox Church (which was almost immediately rejected by the Orthodox Church and people of Byzantium). John did this out of utter desperation: the empire urgently needed help against the rising Ottoman Turks.

The Ottoman tribe emerged as a rising entity in the 14th century and began expanding from its base in northwest Anatolia. The Ottomans took advantage of Byzantine and Balkan conflicts and civil wars to operate as mercenaries and to establish a foothold in Europe. By the 15th century, Ottoman power seemed insurmountable. After the Council of Ferrera-Florence and the temporary union of the churches, a Western Crusade was launched but was defeated by the Ottomans at Varna in 1444. There was little hope left.

On the morning of May 29, 1453, Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481) succeeded where his Muslim and Ottoman forbearers had failed, as had every besieging army for the past millennium: he broke through the city's land wall. Constantine XI (r. 1449–1453), the last Byzantine emperor, fell on the field of battle and with him, the line of Roman emperors that stretched back to Constantine I and to Augustus had come to an end. Yet, the influence of the empire would continue: Mehmed II made Constantinople his new capital, which it remained down to the end of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century, while further to the north in Moscow, Czar Ivan III viewed himself as inheriting the mantle of power from Byzantium and carrying on a divine mission in his "Third Rome."

The Byzantine millennium, from Constantine I in the 4th century CE to Constantine XI in the 15th century, presents an era of tremendous historical importance and remarkable cultural legacy, to which this encyclopedia offers access.

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Chronology

THIRD CENTURY

284 CE	Diocletian becomes the Roman emperor, sole ruler of the entire empire.
285	Emperor Diocletian introduces the rule of the tetrarchy and divides the Roman Empire into eastern and western parts.

FOURTH CENTURY

311	The Edict of Toleration is issued by Emperor Galerius, granting freedom of religion to Christians.
312	Constantine defeats his rival Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and gains control of the entire Western Roman Empire.
313	Constantine's Edict of Milan gives Christianity legal status and grants religious freedom to all citizens of the Roman Empire.
324	Constantine defeats Licinius I at the Battle of Adrianople, ends the tetrarchy, and becomes sole ruler of the Roman Empire.
325	First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea rejects Arianism and declares the full divinity of Christ.
330	Constantine founds the new capital of the Roman Empire on the existing site of the ancient Greek city of Byzantium. He renames the city Constantinople, which becomes the capital of the Byzantine Empire.
337	Constantine is at last baptized a Christian in Nicomedia, just a few days before his death. Division of the Roman Empire among his three sons: Constans I and Constantine II rule the West and Constantius II the East.
337–350	Persian wars against Rome—period of series of conflicts.
360	Julian "the Apostate" becomes Roman emperor and invades Persia.
361	Roman Emperor Julian attempts to revive Paganism, trying to promote ancient Roman religious traditions.

363	Persia defeats the Romans, killing Julian and recapturing Nisibis. School of Nisibis moves to Edessa, along with Ephraim the Syrian.
376	The Visigoths flee the Huns and enter the Eastern Roman Empire.
378	The Goths defeat the Eastern Roman Empire led by Emperor Valens in the Battle of Adrianople.
380	Edict of Thessalonica is issued, declaring Nicene Christianity as the official state religion.
381	Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople asserts Christ's humanity. The council also declares Rome and Constantinople equal.
390	Massacre of Thessalonica carried out against Roman citizens rebelling against Germanic troops of Theodosius I.
391	Emperor Theodosius I closes all pagan temples and forbids pagan worship.
395	The Roman Empire divides in half, the Eastern Empire located in Constantinople and the Western Empire based in Rome/Ravenna.

FIFTH CENTURY

410	Barbarian troops led by Visigoth King Alaric capture and sack Rome.
428	Nestorius ordained as Patriarch of Constantinople. Death of Theodore of Mopsuestia.
431	Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus condemns Nestorius as a heretic; Rabbula, bishop of Edessa, burns writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia. School of the Persians in Edessa first closed by Persians.
438	Theodosian Code is published, compiling the laws of the Roman Empire under the Christian emperors since 312.
443	John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria conclude a theological peace by compromise over Nestorianism.
449	Second Council of Ephesus (Robber's Council) is held.
451	Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon denounces Monophysitism.
457	Leo I is crowned by the patriarch of Constantinople, the first Byzantine emperor to be crowned by a religious official.
476	The Western Empire falls. The Eastern Empire survives and now is labeled as the Byzantine Empire. Romulus Augustulus, the last Western Roman emperor, is deposed by German King Odovacar.
482	Emperor Zeno issues the *Henoticon*, an edict of union designed to reconcile the Monophysites and the Orthodox Church.
484	Rome, angry at Constantinople over the *Henoticon,* excommunicates Emperor Zeno and the patriarch of Constantinople.
489	School of the Persians in Edessa closed for last time by Roman Emperor.

489 Zeno persecutes the Nestorians who flee to the Persian Empire to relocate in Nisibis.
497 Byzantine emperor Anastasius I recognizes Theodoric as the king of Italy.

SIXTH CENTURY

506 A peace treaty is signed between the Byzantine Empire and the Persians.
519 Constantinople repudiates the *Henoticon,* ending its schism with Rome.
526 Justinian, the last emperor to use the title "Caesar," begins his reign.
527–646 The Byzantine Empire controls Egypt.
532 Nika Revolt, devastating riot, erupts in Constantinople against Emperor Justinian I.
533 Constitution *Imperatorium* gives the Institutes the force of law.
534 Justinian conquers the Vandal kingdom in North Africa.
534 *Corpus Iuris Civilis*—codification of the previous Roman laws in one document.
535 Belisarius's first campaign against the Ostrogoths in Italy.
536–562 Justinian I fought a 20-year war to reclaim Italy for the Roman Empire, and the Byzantine Empire finally conquers Italy.
537 The great church Hagia Sofia was rebuilt upon Justinian's order after only five years of construction.
540 The Persians, under Shah Khosrow I, capture and sack Antioch.
542–578 Jacob Bardaeus wanders throughout Syria, consecrating Monophysite priests and bishops.
545 Belisarius returns to Italy to start the second campaign against the Ostrogoths.
550 The Slavs advance toward Thessalonica, entering the region of the Hebron River and the Thracian coast. Thessalonica is saved by the Roman army.
553 Ecumenical Council of Constantinople condemns Theodore of Mopsuestia.
568 Lombards invade Italy, eventually taking northern Italy from the Byzantines.
570 Birth of Muhammad, founder and prophet of Islam, in the Arabian city of Mecca.
572–591 The Turks and the Byzantines ally against the Persians in Byzantine-Sassanid War.
580 The Slavs and the Avars overwhelm Greece, Thrace, and Thessaly.
585 The Slavs march on to Constantinople, but they are driven off by the Byzantine defense.

591–602	Détente between Constantinople and Persia—period of cordial relationship between the two empires.

SEVENTH CENTURY

607	Persians capture Edessa, early center of Christianity in Mesopotamia.
610	Heraclius becomes emperor. Temporary possession of Mesopotamia. The theme system is installed. The empire's language changes to Greek. Eventual loss of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt to Muslims.
611	Persians invade Syria and sack its capital, Antioch, again.
614	Persian forces conquer Jerusalem after a brief siege.
615	The Persians capture Jerusalem, massacring thousands, burning churches, and carrying off "the True Cross."
622	Constantinople pushes the Persians back from the Mediterranean. Muhammad flees to Medina in the Hijra (the flight; beginning of the Islam calendar).
626	Combined Persian and Avaro-Slav siege of Constantinople fails.
627	Emperor Heraclius defeats Persians at Nineveh. Roman armies reach Dastegherd, causing Persian Emperor Khosrow I to flee.
632	Death of Muhammad and Arab conquest of Mesopotamia.
634	Siege and fall of Damascus in Muslim invasion.
634–638	Arab conquest of the Levant.
636	The Arabs defeat both the Persians and the Byzantines in the Battle of Yarmouk.
638	The Arabs capture Jerusalem and conquer Syria.
640	Arabs conquering of Egypt starts, followed by invasion of Alexandria.
642	Arab conquest of Egypt and defeat of Persian Shah Yazdegird III at the Battle of Nahavand.
649	Arab conquest of Persian Empire is completed.
661	Beginning of the Umayyad caliphate based in city of Damascus.
678	First recorded use of Greek fire in Byzantine warfare during the Arab siege of Constantinople.
680–681	The Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople declares the end of Monotheletism and Monoenergism.
690	Byzantines' loss of North Africa to Muslims and fall of Carthage.
693	Umayyads defeat Byzantine forces at Sebastoupolis.

EIGHTH CENTURY

717–718	A large Muslim force besieges Constantinople by land and sea. The attack is held off.
721	Byzantines regain control of Asia Minor from the Muslims.

726	Emperor Leo III bans the use of icons; first period of Iconoclasm starts.
732	Charles Martel stops Arab advance into Europe by winning at the Battle of Tours.
750	Overthrow of the Umayyad caliphate and beginning of the Abbasid caliphate based in Baghdad.
754	Emperor Constantine V bans the making of religious images (Iconoclasm).
787	The Second Ecumenical Council of Nicaea rules an end to Iconoclasm in the Byzantine Christian Church.

NINTH CENTURY

800	Charlemagne, king of the Franks, is crowned "emperor of the Romans" by Pope Leo III in Rome.
814	Louis the Pious succeeds Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans.
843	Veneration of religious images is restored, ending Iconoclasm. Treaty of Verdun. Louis divides his empire among his three surviving sons: Lothar, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald.
863	Byzantine Emperor Michael III sends Saints Cyril and Methodius on a Mission to Moravia.
864	Byzantine Emperor Michael III presides over the baptism of Boris I, khan of the Bulgars.
867–1056	Byzantine emperors of the Macedonian Dynasty reign.
867–869	The rise of the Saffarid Dynasty (Shi'ite) in Persia.
899	*Kletorologion* of Philotheos, a listing of offices and court precedence, is published.

10TH CENTURY

900	The Samanids overthrow the Saffarids, thus extending rule into Persia.
911–912	The Book of the Eparch, Byzantine commercial manual, is issued.
917	Bulgars under Symeon overrun Thrace after victory at river Achelo.
924	Bulgar forces unsuccessfully attack Constantinople.
941	Prince Igor of Kiev attacks Bithynia and later attacks Constantinople; the Byzantines destroy the Russian fleet.
969	Shi'te Fatamid Dynasty is founded in Egypt.
992	Venetians are granted extensive trading rights in the Byzantine Empire.
995	Emperor Basil II reconquers Greece from Bulgars.
999	The Ghaznavids defeat the Samanids in Khurasan and the Qarakhanids seize Bukhara, deposing the Samanids.

11TH CENTURY

1014	Basil II destroys the Bulgar army, earning the epithet Bulgaroktonos ("Bulgar Slayer").
1047	Law School opens in Constantinople, during the reign of Constantine IX.
1054	The Great Schism; the Latin Roman Church and the Greek Orthodox Church excommunicate each other.
1055	Loss of southern Italy to the Normans. The Seljuks enter Baghdad, overthrow the Buwayhids, and become the official protectors of Islam.
1071	The Seljuks defeat the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert, capturing Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes and establishing the Turkish sultanate of Rum in Anatolia. The battle leads to the permanent loss of Asia Minor.
1075	Byzantine control over Syria is lost to the Muslims.
1081–1185	Period of rule of the Comnenian Dynasty.
1087	Byzantines are defeated in Thrace.
1095	Alexius appeals to Urban II at Council of Piacenza for help against the Turks. The First Crusade is proclaimed at the Council of Clermont.
1096	Crusaders arrive at Constantinople. The Crusaders are successful, but eventually fail to cooperate with the Byzantines.
1096–1099	First Crusade; Jerusalem is captured from the Seljuk Turks.
1097	Major participants of the First Crusade arrive in the Middle East.
1099	After seven weeks of siege, the Crusaders capture Jerusalem and begin massacring the city's Muslim and Jewish population.

12TH CENTURY

1121	Defeat of Seljuk Turks and reconquest of southwestern Asia Minor.
1179	Byzantine army defeated by the Sultanate of Rum at Myriokephalon. Hopes of regaining Asia Minor are lost.
1187	The Muslims under Saladin recapture Jerusalem from the Crusaders.

13TH CENTURY

1202	The Fourth Crusade is assembled at Venice, and the knights are led eastward by Marquis Boniface of Montferrat.
1204	Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade capture Constantinople; this event leads to the formation of the Latin Empire of Constantinople as well as the formation of many Byzantine successor states.

1204–1261 The Latin Empire set up in Constantinople lasts almost six decades.
1261 Nicaean Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus reclaims the Byzantine throne.
1261 The successor state of Nicaea recaptures Constantinople and restores the Byzantine Empire.
1282 The Sicilian Vespers, a massacre of the French, takes place in Sicily, Italy, when riots are initiated against King Charles I Angevin.
1291 Muslim armies capture the last Crusader fortress of Acre (Akka).
1299–1300 The Seljuq Sultanate of Anatolia breaks up into smaller principalities, to be succeeded by the Ottoman Turk Emirate.

14TH CENTURY

1321–1328 A Byzantine civil war rages between Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus and his grandson Andronicus III.
1329–1338 The Byzantine-Ottoman War ends with fall of Asia Minor to the Ottoman Turks.
1331 Ottoman invaders seize Nicaea.
1347 The plague Black Death arrives in Western Europe, killing a great number of people in short period of time.
1359–1399 During the Byzantine-Ottoman War, Constantinople is surrounded by Ottomans until 1399.
1389 Victory at Battle of Kosovo over the united Christian forces gives the Ottoman Turks control of Serbia, which becomes vassal state.
1393 Ottoman Sultan Bayazid I brings the kingdom of Bulgaria under his control.

15TH CENTURY

1422 The Ottoman Turks assault Constantinople but are forced to retire.
1453 The Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople, bringing an end the Byzantine Empire.

Government and Politics

OVERVIEW ESSAY

The Imperial Center

For over a millennium, from the 4th to the 15th centuries, Constantinople served as the imperial center of the Byzantine Empire, and under the Ottoman Empire that followed, it continued its remarkable run as an imperial capital until the 20th century. This "Queen of Cities" served as the Byzantine Empire's political, economic, and religious center. Within its massive walls was the sprawling imperial palace complex, which was more like a beautiful university campus than a Western medieval castle or grand Victorian palace. Here was the residence of the imperial family and also the seat of the imperial government. Adjacent to this complex was the Hippodrome, where people gathered en masse for lavish public entertainments and where the emperor had direct contact with his subjects. Also adjacent to the palace complex was Hagia Sophia ("Holy Wisdom"), the city's grandest church and the site of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the bishop of Constantinople, who was the leading religious official of the empire. Officials and orders flowed from the capital to the provinces and even beyond the frontiers on diplomatic, military, and religious missions, while information, tax revenue, products of trade, domestic travelers, merchants, migrants, and foreign diplomats flowed to the capital. The goal of this section is to explore how the imperial and ecclesiastical administrations worked in spite of their limitations.

Agents of Imperial Power

Emperors exercised authority through the imperial administration, which was made up of state officials organized into various fiscal, administrative, and military departments, as well as honorary ranks, all granted by the emperor. The highest dignitaries were those closest to the center of imperial power, who also served in the Senate of Constantinople. This section highlights aspects of the imperial administration through entries on the Senate and political offices, both high (master of offices) and low (*notarius*) and honorary ranks (*kouropalates; magistros; nobelissimos; patrikios; proedros*), with some reserved for specific groups, including eunuchs (*koubikoularioi*) or imperial family members (*sebastos*). Emperors carefully regulated appointments, which conferred not only status and authority but also salary, and thus maintained detailed and accurate records of ranks and appointments (*Taktikon Uspensky;*

Kletorologion of Philotheos). With no hereditary aristocracy, access to positions of power was open, and social mobility was a notable feature of Byzantine history, particularly in its early and middle periods, though the obstacle of economic inequity was still daunting. In addition, bribes were a standard means of gaining access to such offices, which added a further barrier to social advancement, a practice that emperors occasionally tried to curtail (*suffragia*). Yet, the historical record had no shortage of rags-to-riches stories in Byzantium, including its most famous imperial couple, Justinian and Theodora in the sixth century.

The officials of the civil and military administrations were the instruments through which imperial authority manifested itself throughout the empire. As such, it was itself sometimes the object of reforms to bolster the effectiveness of imperial control. These reforms also provoked a backlash, particularly by elites whose relative autonomy or power was being threatened (see Justinian, Governmental Reforms of; *De Magistratibus* [John the Lydian]). Ensuring the honesty and fidelity of officials was a central concern for emperors who maintained an information network to move messages and staff quickly along the way (*cursus publicus*) as well as imperial observers, or spies, to keep eyes and ears open for potential internal threats (*agentes in rebus*).

Byzantine Diplomacy

State officials were also agents of imperial power beyond the empire's borders through diplomatic activity. Byzantine diplomacy guided the state through centuries of political and military challenges. The empire's neighbors changed over the centuries from Huns to Avars, Bulgars, Pechenegs, and Russians in the north; from Sassanid Persia to the Abbasid Caliphate to Turkish domination in the east; and from Goths and Vandals to Normans and Crusaders in the west. Diplomacy, fortified by the imperial administration and military apparatus, was the means by which the empire survived, which is reflected in Constantine VII's *On the Administration of the Empire*, a 10th-century manual the emperor wrote for his son Emperor Romanus II. Three entries in this section focus specifically on this topic (diplomacy; bureau of Barbarians; *On the Administration of the Empire*).

Limitations of Imperial Authority

While emperors cultivated and projected an aura of supreme power through ceremony and public display, wielding this power through the imperial administrative infrastructure, their power was grand but also limited. They were expected to adhere to, and uphold, tradition and to maintain a harmonious relationship with the church, which, as discussed below, was an extremely difficult endeavor. Finally, as the highest position in the empire, the competition for the imperial throne—or for influence over it—was intense. Even the strongest emperors, like Justinian in the 6th century and Basil II in the 10th and 11th centuries, had to withstand major direct challenges. The empire did not have political parties, but it did have factions that organized around particular interests to exert pressure on the imperial throne.

Ecclesiastical Authority and Imperial Power

In addition to the imperial office, the other essential pillar of the Byzantine state and society was the Orthodox Church. Entries in this section provide insight into the organization of the ecclesiastical administration as well as its relationship with the imperial office. Imperial ideology portrayed the Byzantine Empire as a reflection of heaven, a kingdom of God on earth, with the emperor serving as the God-appointed monarch who presided over human affairs while the church looked after "things divine." Emperors sought to forge theological unity by summoning bishops to ecumenical ("universal") councils to establish "correct" doctrine, but these attempts also further stirred division, with some contested theological positions becoming even more entrenched in opposition. Christian unity was a chimera, a mythical hope never to be realized.

While emperors controlled the appointment of bishops and through this means had a great ability to affect ecclesiastical policy, at least in the short term, their long-term authority was nevertheless limited, and they could not force theological unity or eliminate religious opposition. Emperors could influence and pressure well, and nearly one-third of all the patriarchs of Constantinople were deposed or otherwise forced out of office. Yet, emperors could not dictate theological positions to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, at least to the extent that this position would be sustainable for the long term. In all periods of Byzantine history, bishops and monks were willing to rally in open defiance of imperial theological positions, and by doing so, demonstrated the real limitations of imperial power. Moreover, emperors were not priests and needed ecclesiastical officials to perform important Christian ceremonies, including coronation, marriage, baptism, and religious services, which provided another means to exert ecclesiastical pressure on emperors. The relationship between bishop and emperor was complex, fluid, and changing, collaborative and antagonistic, but it was not, as it is so often crudely reduced to, "Caesaropapist."

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Agentes in Rebus

Agentes in rebus was the name for a company of imperial messengers and inspectors that was directed by the master of offices, who controlled the *cursus publicus*, a Byzantine communication and transportation network. The master of offices (*magister officiorum* in Latin) was one of the highest and most powerful political positions in civil administration of the early Byzantine Empire. The purpose of the duty was to serve as the leading figure in the civil administration and to preside over the imperial government's central administration. Use of the imperial post was strictly controlled and required special authorization. Travel documents were required (called *evectiones* for the fast post and *tractoriae* for the slow), and such authorization could be granted by the master of offices or by the praetorian prefect, who oversaw provincial administration. Such authorization could also be granted by the emperor for special needs, such as for bishops attending ecumenical councils. Other imperial officials were given a small number of passes for use each year. *Agentes in rebus* played a role in ensuring the proper use of the *cursus publicus*, which was restricted to activity authorized by the imperial government.

The *agentes in rebus* were preceded in their duties as messengers and inspectors by the *frumentarii*, who originally were sent to oversee the movement of grain but expanded their duties to investigating and rooting out corruption by officials. The corps was reconstituted as *agentes in rebus* during the reign of Emperor Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE) or by his predecessor, Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE). Modern scholars are uncertain about which emperor created the position of master of offices in whose bureau the *agentes in rebus* served. The *agentes in rebus* were sent to the Byzantine provinces to gather and pass on information regarding issues of state security and to support the management of imperial construction projects and the fidelity of provincial offices. The corps of *agentes in rebus* greatly expanded in numbers, with more than 1,200 recorded by the reign of Leo I (r. 457–474 CE).

Equipped with the management of the *cursus publicus* and his *agentes in rebus*, the master of offices headed the empire's "secret police," scrutinizing activity in the provinces that could potentially undermine imperial authority and, by doing so, encourage obedience. Related to the master of offices' authority over the imperial post, diplomatic negotiations became the responsibility of this office. In the capital, the master of offices was responsible for the protection of the emperor and even directed an imperial guard unit of several thousand troops, called the *Scholae Palatinae*. The master of offices supervised the imperial palace itself and managed the court schedule, regulating access to the emperor's ear. This supervision included control over the palace administration and imperial stables. Beyond the capital, the master of offices sought to ensure imperial safety by rooting out and arresting disloyal officials, uncovering possible conspiracies against the emperor, and moving the condemned into exile.

The 7th century marked the end of the early Byzantine period (4th through 6th centuries CE) and its transition into the middle period (7th through 12th centuries CE). The cataclysmic, though victorious, Persian War (602–629 CE) was followed by the

shock of Arab invasions. The latter deprived Byzantium of the wealthy provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa, reducing the empire's hold only to Anatolia (modern Turkey) in the East. At the same time, the Balkans were being overrun by Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs, which further reduced and impoverished the empire. The extensive and expensive imperial bureaus and offices of the early Byzantine Empire were wiped away, and a new, more streamlined governmental structure emerged. As a result, the master of offices, with its complex array of duties and subordinates, was eliminated. In its place a position called *logothetes tou dromou* emerged to manage the duties of communication, control of foreign diplomats, and internal security monitoring. Just as with the master of offices, the *agentes in rebus* also came to an end in this period.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Cursus Publicus*; Master of Offices; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Bulgars; Persians; Secret Societies; Slavs; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with

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Athanasios, Political Reforms of Late 13th/Early 14th Centuries

Athanasios was patriarch of Constantinople from 1289–1293 and again from 1303–1309, during the reign of Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (r. 1282–1328). Many of his writings are extant, including letters, sermons, and patriarchal decisions. To understand Athanasios's tenure, it must be set in a historical context ranging from the Fourth Crusade at the start of the 13th century to the Turkish domination of Anatolia a century later.

In 1204, the army of the Fourth Crusade conquered Constantinople, imposing a Catholic emperor and patriarch on the city and carving up the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine aristocrats and Orthodox leaders fled the capital and established independent successor states in Greece and Anatolia, one of which was based at Nicaea, about 150 miles east of Constantinople. With a string of highly effective rulers, the principality of Nicaea became a well-defended and prosperous state that would recover Constantinople and restore the Byzantine Empire. In 1258, the ruler of Nicaea died, leaving the throne to his seven-year-old son, John IV Laskaris. Taking advantage of the power vacuum, a talented and unscrupulous general named Michael Palaiologos seized control and was crowned coemperor in 1259. In 1261, Michael fulfilled the Orthodox dream of retaking Constantinople and had Arsenios, the Orthodox

patriarch, crown him again as emperor, this time in Hagia Sophia, along with his young son, Andronikos, as coemperor. By year's end, Michael ordered the blinding of John IV Laskaris and exiled him to a monastery. A new dynasty had emerged: the Palaiologan (1259–1453).

Refusing to tolerate Michael's treachery, Arsenios excommunicated the emperor but was deposed and replaced with a monk named Joseph. This act alienated a large bloc within the church, which refused to recognize Joseph as patriarch, believing that Arsenios had been unjustly condemned and thus was still in office. This faction, known as the Arsenites, created a rift in the church and would prove to be a problem for Patriarch Athanasios through his second tenure. Meanwhile, the political situation was extremely tense. Charles of Anjou, Catholic ruler of southern Italy and Sicily, was preparing an invasion of the Byzantine Empire, with papal sanction. To prevent this, Michael agreed to a union of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, including recognition of papal primacy, at the Council of Lyons in 1274. Byzantine tradition was sacrificed for immediate political expediency, but the mighty Charles of Anjou was restrained. Now, the papacy demanded implementation of the union, while the Byzantine population, along with Patriarch Joseph, utterly rejected it. Michael removed Joseph and replaced him with Patriarch John Bekkos, who supported the union. Struggling over how to reduce opposition and implement the union, Michael delayed as long as possible, until papal patience ran out. Charles of Anjou again prepared to invade, but Michael used Byzantine gold to foment rebellion in Sicily, through which, for the second time, he prevented an invasion.

Michael died in 1282, and the union was repudiated by his son and successor, Andronikos II (r. 1282–1328), who deposed John Bekkos and returned Joseph, the defender of Orthodoxy, to the patriarchal throne. Andronikos was celebrated for his piety, in contrast to his father, who had been denied an Orthodox burial. In 1289, Andronikos appointed a devout monk named Athanasios as patriarch. Andronikos was inspired by the fervent monk and likely hoped that his sanctity would help heal the Arsenite schism, though it did not.

Athanasios guided the church with a demanding hand, holding monks and clergy to the highest standards of accountability. Wherever he witnessed or learned of injustice or impropriety, Athanasios spoke out—even to Constantinopolitan elites, including the emperor. Such vigor provoked resistance, and Athanasios abdicated in frustration, writing a letter in which he condemned his enemies and those misled by them—in other words, the emperor—and hiding it in Hagia Sophia. Andronikos replaced Athanasios with another monk, John XII Kosmas (r. 1294–1303), who continued on the path of Athanasios's reforms. When Athanasios's letter was discovered in 1303, the pious emperor was acutely fearful and restored him as patriarch, so that he could lift his condemnation. In return, Athanasios demanded a promise from the emperor to keep the church free from any civil interference or imperial encumbrances.

Like Patriarch John XII, Athanasios was greatly concerned with the plight of the poor and the extent to which imperial taxation was excessively pressing them, and he predicted a coming disaster. In early 1304, an earthquake struck Constantinople,

which the emperor interpreted as confirmation of the sanctity of Athanasios and his gift of prophecy. This event bolstered the emperor's support and fired the patriarch's zeal. Athanasios spoke out in defense of the poor, chastised the powerful, and ceaselessly condemned corruption and immorality. He was so demanding that many clerics fled to the Genoese Catholic community in Pera, just beyond Constantinople.

Compounding problems in Constantinople was a stream of refugees fleeing turmoil in Anatolia. By 1300, diverse Turkic tribes dominated Anatolia; among these and closest to Constantinople was a tribe under the leadership of Osman (r. 1299–1326), whose name would be used both for his tribe and empire: Ottoman. Faced with dire financial straits, Andronikos had reduced military spending and eliminated what was left of the Byzantine navy, looking to the west for naval and military support. Against the Turks, Andronikos propelled the remaining Byzantine troops and expensive Western mercenaries, who were regularly more dangerous to Byzantines than to Turks.

Western Anatolia became a contested frontier, with refugees fleeing to the capital for safety. This plight expanded the hardships there, which Athanasios sought to alleviate. These refugees put a strain on the limited resources of the capital and spurred Athanasios's reform efforts. The situation was made worse by extremely cold winters and famine. Athanasios struggled to keep soup kitchens open to feed the poor, while advising the emperor on how best to defend the empire. The patriarch asserted his right to inspect the court and its officials and counseled the emperor to avoid relations with the Catholic West. He believed that the sins of the Orthodox were the cause of the state's troubles and zealously purged what he considered immorality and impropriety, demanding that bishops return to their jurisdictions in Anatolia, forbidding clergy from taking up arms, permitting the physical punishment of wayward monks, and condemning the consultation of physicians and even sleeping naked in bed. In addition to church discipline, Athanasios ruled on marriage, sexual assault, adultery and prostitution, murder, taverns, and bathhouses. For the patriarch, correcting sinful behaviors trumped military activity as the best defense against the Turks. His fervor and relentless demands made him unpopular with influential figures in Constantinople, who collaborated with the lingering Arsenite opposition. In 1309, Athanasius resigned and was replaced by a patriarch quite devoid of such vigor. With Athanasios's abdication, the Arsenite Schism finally came to an end.. Athanasios's activity had no lasting impact on the empire, but his sanctity was well established, and he was venerated as a saint in the Orthodox Church.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Eastern Orthodox Church; Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Environment; Taxes; *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade

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Autocracy

Autokrator is the Byzantine Greek word for emperor, a composite of *autos* (self) and *kratos* (power), and the translation of the Latin word *imperator*. From the seventh century on, the Byzantine emperor was also called *basileus*, and the two terms started to be used together for the emperor, who was considered to be the *basileus and autokrator in Christ*. Yet, reference to the Byzantine Empire as an autocracy may overstate the reality of the emperor's power beyond its historical limits. While emperors were vastly powerful, there were significant limitations to their authority.

The emperor cultivated and projected an aura of supreme power. His power and oversight were compared to that of the sun, and imperial ideology portrayed the emperor as appointed by God himself. Lacking modern communication conveniences for propaganda—such as newspapers, radio, TV, and the Internet—Byzantine emperors relied on ceremony and public displays to broadcast imperial power and to announce that the emperor was God's representative on earth.

The emperor resided in a colossal palace complex in Constantinople. The Great Palace was fortified, and its entrance marked by enormous bronze doors called the Chalke gate, which was surrounded by images of emperors and crowned with an icon of Christ. The Great Palace was at the heart of the city, across from the Hagia Sophia, next to the Baths of Zeuxippos, and connected directly to the Hippodrome. Just past the Chalke gate were stationed imperial guard units, which protected the emperor. Inside the complex were churches, baths, a private water and grain supply, bakeries, a treasury, arms depositories, a prison, stables, and even a polo ground and private harbor. The Great Palace was also the epicenter of imperial government, with administrative activity taking place in halls, like the Golden Hall (*Chrysotriklinos*), and imperial receptions in the Magnaura, where onlookers stood awestruck at the mechanical spectacle of the imperial throne. Such occasions were intentional and carefully controlled, with guards and officials moving visitors about according to an imperial script.

The emperor consulted with his top advisors, highest officials (the *consistorium*), and members of the senate at a gathering called a *silention*. This term referred to the respectful silence expected at meetings, which could only be broken upon the emperor's approval to speak. Court attendants, known as the *silentarioi*, enforced this ritual silence. At imperial banquets, seating was prudently orchestrated to manifest the rank and status of all attendees and to exalt the emperor. An official called the *atriklines* was responsible for this complicated task. Manuals helped in this process, including

the *Kletorologion* of Protospatharios and *Atriklines* Philotheos, which was composed in 899 CE during the reign of Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE). The Great Palace represented and emanated imperial power, with officials and orders flowing out and information, petitions, and tax revenue flowing in.

The Great Palace also served as the private residence of the imperial family. There, a special room bathed in purple was used as an official birthing room—purple being the color reserved for the emperor. And so, imperial children were literally born "in the purple," hence the epithet for such children, *porphyrogenitus* ("born in the purple"). The term designated impeccable legitimacy. The emperor's purple silks and crimson boots made clear his exalted, imperial status, which set him apart from all those around. Thus, for anyone beyond the imperial family to don purple was a visual and unmistakable statement of rebellion.

Imperial ideology held the emperor responsible for the preservation of order (*taxis* in Greek), and a critical means of manifesting imperial control and order was through ceremony (also *taxis* in Greek). During such ceremonies, officials, clergy, monks, soldiers, and the people of Constantinople performed ritualized movements, cheers, and oaths, in accordance with the imperial will. By fulfilling their roles, they demonstrated the centrality of imperial power and their loyalty. Imperial ceremony—whether at the games in the Hippodrome, during public processions, in imperial audiences, at banquets in the palace, or in churches—presented the emperor, administration, clergy, and populace as a single harmonious entity. Such ritual shrouded the emperor in a transcendent aura, epitomizing his role as God's representative on earth.

Law was another means of projecting imperial power. Emperors were responsible for the administration of justice and were the source of law, legislating to create a society in their ideal image. Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) ordered the most celebrated legislative work of Byzantine history: the *Code, Digest, Institutes*, and *Novels*. However, such activity continued, notably under the Syrian (717–802 CE) and Macedonian (867–1056 CE) Dynasties. Emperors attempted to legislate on matters of morality (Justinian outlawed blasphemy and adultery) and theology, but such legal pronouncements testify to the very limitation of such legislation. For example, imperial laws outlawed the sale of government offices and the special fees (*sportulae*) charged by officials for doing their jobs. The efforts failed, and emperors later lifted the bans and simply tried to control the costs of these activities.

If ceremony and law were mechanisms of autocratic power, they also offered a pathway to subvert that power and to expose the limitation of imperial control. The Hippodrome offered the emperors an ideal location to manifest the ceremony of imperial power, with 100,000 people attending chariot races and other entertainment. Here emperor and populace met face-to-face and the people could speak, collectively through acclamations, directly to the emperor, often expressing support and appreciation but also making petitions, for which they sought imperial favor. If the emperor did not grant their petition, the crowd would become unruly or, worse, spin completely out of control. A situation like this one, which occurred in January 532 CE, led to a weeklong uprising called the Nika Revolt. While Emperor Justinian had initially held his ground, he later opted to yield to the people's demands, removing three of his

highest officials. This attempt at ameliorating the problem, however, did not calm the situation, which became more heated when the crowd, in collusion with some senators, sought to restore the family of Emperor Anastasios (r. 491–518 CE) to the imperial throne. With the city in flames and a rival standing in the imperial box (*kathisma*) in the Hippodrome, Justinian considered fleeing the palace and abandoning the city entirely. His resolve was steadied by his wife, Theodora, after which, through two loyal and experienced commanders (Belisarius and Mundo), he unleashed full military might. A massacre followed, with tens of thousands killed. The rival was executed, the ringleaders exiled, and their property confiscated. At great cost, Justinian restored order, but not all emperors would be as lucky against such resistance. The ire of the populace violently toppled Emperors Michael V (r. 1041–1042) and Andronikos I (r. 1182–1185). In addition, other emperors fell victim to military revolts, including Maurice (r. 582–602 CE) and Michael I Rangabe (r. 811–813 CE), or to palace intrigue, including Leo V (r. 813–820 CE), Michael III (r. 842–867 CE), Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE), Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963–969 CE), and Romanus III Argyros (r. 1028–1034). Despite prodigious expense and effort, imperial ideology was not sufficient to secure a hold of the imperial throne.

The emperor's power was also notoriously limited in matters of theology. The palace faced tremendous opposition if imperial policy contradicted accepted norms, practices, or beliefs. While the emperor could influence and pressure, he could not dictate theological positions to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, at least not to an extent that would be sustainable. Imperial attempts to force the issue could, in fact, undermine imperial power. The monastic leader Theodore of Stoudios, for example, confronted multiple emperors over matters of morality and theology from the 790s to the 820s CE. Emperors were unsuccessful at silencing the zealous monk, who utilized an underground network of supporters and often received aid from sympathetic members of the imperial administration itself. Such opponents, who defied emperors, from Athanasius of Alexandria in the 4th century to Gennadios II, Patriarch of Constantinople, in the 15th, became celebrated as saints and heroes of the faith, thus becoming reminders of the limitations of the emperor's autocratic power.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Caesaropapism; *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; *Individuals*: Justinian; Lecapenus, Romanus I; Maurice; *Key Events*: Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Golden Gate (Constantinople); Great Palace of Constantinople; Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Bureau of Barbarians

The Bureau of Barbarians (*scrinium barbarorum*) was an administrative unit in the early Byzantine Empire under the jurisdiction of the master of offices. Evidence for the Bureau of Barbarians' existence first appeared in the fifth century, though the Bureau likely predated this initial appearance in the written record. The master of offices (*magister officiorum*) was one of the highest and most powerful political positions in civil administration of the early Byzantine Empire. The office was likely created by the Emperor Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE), and its purpose was to preside over the imperial government's central administration.

The position had many, varied responsibilities. The master of offices controlled the *cursus publicus*, which was the imperial communication and transportation network, and directed a company of imperial messengers and inspectors known as *agentes in rebus*. In addition, and related to the master of offices' authority over the imperial post, diplomatic negotiations became the responsibility of this office, as did oversight of foreign ambassadors in the empire. To manage the diplomatic needs of the empire, which involved working with myriad people and diverse languages, the master of offices had a corps of interpreters at his disposal. The master of offices, equipped with the management of the *cursus publicus* and his *agentes in rebus*, became the head of the empire's "secret police," scrutinizing activity in the provinces that could potentially undermine imperial authority and, by doing so, encouraging obedience. Finally, the master of offices also maintained oversight of the frontier forces known as *limitanei*, who guarded the Empire's border areas (*limes*). Yet, *limitanei* were not mobile troops and by the sixth century were essentially composed of farmers who had inherited the responsibility of defending their local frontiers. The Bureau of Barbarians likely connected to the *agentes in rebus* and operated within this administrative unit of the early Byzantine Empire, though greater detail of its composition and precise duties are not entirely clear.

The role of the Bureau of Barbarians is thought to have supported the master of offices' function of correspondence and diplomacy with "barbarian" (non-Roman) peoples who were in contact with the Roman Empire. Still, it is difficult to determine the exact functions or to clearly distinguish the Bureau of Barbarians' duties from those of other officials working in the department. The Bureau appeared to continue at least into the eighth century, until the extensive and expensive imperial offices of the early Byzantine Empire had been wiped away by the cataclysm of the seventh century and a new, more streamlined governmental structure. As a result, the position of the master of offices, with its complex array of duties and subordinates, was eliminated. In its place, the *logothetes tou dromou* ("secretary of the imperial post") emerged to manage the duties of communication, control of foreign diplomats, and internal security.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Cursus Publicus; Magistros*; Master of Offices; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; *Military*: *Comitatenses; Limitanei*

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Byzantinism

According to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, Prince Vladimir of Kiev (r. 980–1015 CE) sent emissaries to the Byzantine Empire to investigate Orthodox Christianity. Vladimir and his subjects were pagan at the time, and their ruler was exploring various religious options, including Islam and Christianity. One can only imagine the impression that a visit to a city of Constantinople's size and wealth would have on medieval visitors, including an awe-inspiring experience in Hagia Sophia, then the largest cathedral in the Christian world. The impression on these emissaries was so great that they reported to Vladimir that they were uncertain whether they were any longer on earth or had transcended into a heavenly realm. By that time, the Russians had been drawn to Constantinople for more than a century, both as attackers and traders, and they had become increasingly lured by Byzantine culture. Vladimir's conversion to Orthodox Christianity in 988 CE cemented a strong cultural link with Constantinople. In the 14th century, Moscow, approximately 470 miles north of Kiev, emerged as the center of Russian political, economic, and religious power, but the strong link with Constantinople remained intact and even helped Moscow legitimize its preeminence.

Several centuries before Vladimir's conversion, Balkan peoples had experienced similar encounters with the Byzantine Empire, oscillating between open conflict and peaceful exchange. Despite their frequent animosity, they felt the magnetic attraction of Byzantine culture, from its art and architecture to its religious and political institutions. In the ninth century, Boris, Khan of the Bulgars, accepted Orthodox Christianity and adopted the baptismal name of Michael, after the reigning emperor of Byzantium. Boris-Michael's son and successor, Symeon (r. 893–927 CE), was often hostile to the empire but was so thoroughly influenced by it that he sought to become emperor himself, an unfulfilled dream that would be emulated by many subsequent Balkan rulers. Constantinople wielded cultural influence and provided a model of religious and political institutions for peoples of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. In fact, the alphabet used by the Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians was the product of Byzantine missionaries. Cyril, one of the apostles to the Slavs (along with his brother Methodius), is credited with inventing the predecessor of the modern script used today, which still bears his name: Cyrillic. Thus, every written word in these languages continues to reflect the influence of Byzantium.

That the Byzantine Empire influenced the political and cultural outlook of its medieval neighbors is beyond question. For example, George Ostrogorsky, one of the

formative historians of Byzantium, described the influential connection between the culture and institutions of the Byzantine Empire on the development of Russian history, explaining:

> [Czar] Ivan III [1462–1505], the great liberator and consolidator of the Russian lands, married the daughter of the [Byzantine] Despot Thomas Palaeologus, the niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium. He assumed the imperial Byzantine two-headed eagle in his arms, introduced Byzantine ceremonial into Muscovy and soon made Russia the leader of the Christian East as Byzantium had once been. Russia became the obvious heir of the Byzantine Empire and it took over from Constantinople Roman conceptions in their Byzantine form: if Constantinople was the New Rome, Moscow became the "Third Rome." The great tradition of Byzantium, its faith, its political ideas, its spirituality, lived on through the centuries in the Russian Empire. (Ostrogorsky, p. 507)

Yet, some modern commentators have blamed this Byzantine influence to be the source of fundamental problems for Russian and Balkan peoples. The emergence of authoritarian governments, controlled economies, restricted free speech, strict state-church relations, and an absence of freedom in the public sphere were to be caused by, they argued, the legacy of Byzantium. The West, which had escaped this nefarious influence, produced a separation of church and state, as well as the Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment. These stepping-stones, in turn, gave birth to representative government, greater individual freedom, and scientific and technological developments that transformed the modern world. And so, Byzantium was the cause of the deteriorating East. This view is known as Byzantinism, though much of the case for it draws on generalization, simplification, stereotype, and questionable causality.

A significant part of the debate over the significance of Byzantium has been the hostility against this empire that was deeply embedded in Western culture since the early Middle Ages. Exemplifying this hostility is the use of the adjective "byzantine" in the English language. "Byzantine" is used not to convey the idea of wealth or technological advancement, which this civilization clearly represented in the medieval period, but to highlight unnecessary complexity and duplicity, reducing "byzantine" to a far inferior "other." The roots of this tension and hostility were already present by the early medieval period, but with the emergence of Carolingian power in the eighth and ninth centuries, and the coronation of Charlemagne as a rival Roman emperor in 800 CE, East-West tensions flared. The Schism of 1054, which separated Catholic and Orthodox Churches by mutual excommunications, followed by the age of the Crusades, which launched increasingly hostile Catholic armies through the Byzantine Empire, caused still further strain. This increasing sense of hostility and "otherness" culminated in the Fourth Crusade, when a Western army sacked Constantinople in 1204 and dismembered the Byzantine Empire. The Western triumph was justified by these increasingly hostile views of Byzantium. In the later Middle Ages, the rising wealth and political power of the West vis-à-vis the Byzantine Empire necessitated no change in this perception of Byzantium.

The conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 and the absorption of the Byzantine Empire by the Ottomans eliminated any need to reevaluate this Western view of Byzantine civilization. The cultural legacy of Byzantium, including its role in shaping Christian doctrine for Eastern *and* Western Christianity, and its medieval technological, economic, and cultural prowess, were unacknowledged and then conveniently forgotten.

By the Enlightenment, the *modern* Western view of Byzantium had begun to take shape. In this "Age of Reason," philosophers like Voltaire (1694–1778) and Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) and historians like Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) portrayed Byzantium, rather than the medieval West, as the epitome of the backward society. In their view, this civilization was inhibited by authoritarian institutions and partisan duplicity, whose energies were misdirected into religious, rather than scientific or philosophical, speculation. Even political and economic theorist Karl Marx (1818–1883) found in the Byzantine legacy a source of blame for Russia's contemporary failings.

For such modern critics, Byzantium was the antithesis of modernity and had held back those societies that it had most influenced. Such criticism continued into the 20th and 21st centuries, making Byzantium the scapegoat for a host of modern problems, ranging from communism to authoritarianism in current regimes. Yet, explaining historical realities and long-term transformations are more complicated than this simplified explanation, built on a long-standing anti-Byzantine bias. Byzantinism, like "Caesaropapism," provides a highly problematic, if convenient, explanation.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Caesaropapism; Eastern Orthodox Church; *Individuals*: Methodius and Cyril, Apostles to the Slavs; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Franks; Slavs; *Key Events*: Charlemagne, Coronation of; Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Fourth Crusade; Great Schism

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Caesaropapism

Caesaropapism is the notion that the Byzantine emperor wielded supreme power over religious affairs in the Byzantine Empire, with the church hierarchy subordinate to imperial control and serving as a branch of imperial government, along with civil and military institutions and administration. As a descriptive of Byzantium, Caesaropapism reduces a millennium of Byzantine history and culture to a simplified and static

portrait and has produced a lasting stereotype of Byzantium, which has been rejected by scholars of Byzantine history. Yet, the notion of Caesaropapist Byzantium persists among nonspecialists and, as a result, continues to be routinely propagated, regardless of the evidence.

According to imperial ideology, the Byzantine Empire reflected heaven: a kingdom of God on earth, with the emperor serving as the God-appointed monarch who presided over human affairs, while the church looked after "things divine." Such claims, at least in their Christian context, began during the reign of Constantine I and were championed by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, who promoted such a vision in his *Life of Constantine*, among other texts. Constantine became a patron of the church, promoted the authority of bishops, and established the imperial precedent of summoning ecumenical councils by calling the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE to resolve theological disputes in the church. Emperors sought to forge theological unity and defend correct doctrine, as well as support and protect the church.

Emperors also sought to expand their authority. In the sixth century, Justinian declared that the two great blessings with which humanity was endowed were the priesthood and the imperial office, both deriving from the same divine source, and that it was the emperor's responsibility not only to manage human affairs (*imperium*) but also to ensure the dignity of the clergy, who, by properly tending to its work, would help to preserve the empire. The emperor, as God's chosen ruler, had an obligation to monitor and influence the human affairs *within* the church hierarchy (*sacerdotium*), so that it could better attend to sacred matters.

Emperors did not have such a free hand, but they did have tremendous influence on the appointment of bishops and through this means, at least in the short term, an ability to directly affect church activities or policy. Emperors approved the appointment of the most important bishops in the empire, particularly the patriarch of Constantinople, whom the emperor chose himself, sometimes appointing a loyal layperson or a relative (emperors Leo VI [r. 886–912 CE] and Romanus I [r. 919–944 CE] chose their teenage brother and son, respectively), and approximately one-third of patriarchs were forced out or resigned under imperial pressure.

Despite such authority, emperors were clearly limited in power. The palace faced tremendous opposition if imperial policy contradicted accepted norms, practices, or beliefs. The emperor could influence and pressure but could not dictate theological positions to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, at least to the extent that the position would be sustainable. Thus, imperial support for Arian theology failed in the fourth century and for Monophysite ("one nature") theology in the fifth and early sixth centuries. Even Justinian, despite paramount imperial power, could not find a way to unite bishops divided by debates over Christology (the study of the relationship between Christ's human and divine natures).

In the seventh century, emperors promoted the religious position that Christ's human and divine natures shared one single will (called Monotheletism, "one will") as a compromise position to unite Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian (Monophysite) Christianity, but this too failed. Among its opponents was a masterful theologian and tireless monk named Maximus the Confessor, who refused to be silent, despite an

imperial mandate to do so. Maximus organized resistance but was arrested, mutilated, and exiled, only to be vindicated by the condemnation of Monotheletism at the Sixth Ecumenical Council and then venerated as a saint.

Imperial support for eighth-century Iconoclasm, a policy condemning religious images as idolatry, ultimately collapsed against monastic and episcopal opposition. Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE), who initiated this policy, was said to have boldly asserted that "I am priest and emperor." Yet, when Iconoclasm was condemned by the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 CE, Leo became yet another emperor to be defeated and vilified, as was his son, Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), who was memorialized with the sobriquet "Kopronymos" ("Name of Dung"). Church leaders who had defied emperors were celebrated as saints, heroes of the faith, who triumphed over emperors.

The aforementioned policies serve as examples of the limitations of imperial authority over the church, which then celebrated the monks and bishops who triumphantly defied imperial policy in defense of Orthodoxy. Such tension was already evident in the fourth century, when Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria opposed Arianism and faced five periods of exile by different emperors, starting with Constantine himself; Bishop Ambrose of Milan, who forced Emperor Theodosius I to repent publicly for his violent reprisal against the people of Thessalonica; and Patriarch John Chrysostom of Constantinople, who chastised improper behavior, even in the palace. John was exiled by Emperor Arcadius (r. 395–408 CE), but his remains, which became viewed as sacred relics, were returned to

IMPERIAL SARCOPHAGI

The Church of the Holy Apostles began as a mausoleum built by Emperor Constantine, who established the precedent for imperial burials that continued in this same location down to Emperor Constantine VIII, who was interred in 1028. The ceremony was marked by a funeral procession and a liturgy for the dead. Relatives would visit the deceased on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th day after burial. The reigning emperor would also show respects to his predecessors by visiting their tombs at the Church of Holy Apostles and accompanying this with the distribution of gifts to the city's poor. In 1204, the church and its imperial sarcophagi were looted by Crusaders, who stormed the city during the Fourth Crusade. By then, the Comneni Dynasty had begun using the Church of the Pantocrator, which was founded by Empress Irene, wife of Emperor John II Comnenus (1118–1143), as their resting place, and some emperors of the Palaeologan Dynasty would use it as well. After the Ottoman conquest in 1453, Sultan Mehmet II ordered the Church of the Holy Apostles to be destroyed; on it, he built his Conqueror's Mosque, the Fatih Camii and its sprawling mosque complex (*külliye*), between 1462 and 1470. Like his Byzantine imperial predecessors, Sultan Mehmet II is also buried on this site. At the same time, the Church of the Pantocrator was seized and converted into a mosque. The large imperial sarcophagi that once resided at these sites were scattered or destroyed. Some were brought within the Ottoman palace complex and can be seen today in the courtyard of Istanbul's Archaeological Museum.

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Constantinople by the emperor's son, who repented for the actions of his wayward father. In all periods of Byzantine history, there was willingness not only by bishops and monks but also by others to stand in defiance of or even actively work against imperial power.

Despite Leo III's claim, emperors were not priests, and so ecclesiastical officials were needed to perform essential Christian ceremonies, such as coronations (performed by the patriarch starting in the seventh century), marriages, and the baptisms of imperial children. Patriarchal refusal to accept the marriages of Constantine VI (r. 780–797 CE) and Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE), whom they viewed as adulterous, created major political challenges and undermined imperial power for decades.

Patriarchs could also refuse to support imperial religious policy, sometimes losing their positions as a result. Two prominent examples are Tarasius and Nicephorus, both of whom opposed Iconoclasm. At other times, patriarchs witnessed the emperor backing down. In the 10th century, Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969 CE) requested that Patriarch Polyeuktos receive Christian soldiers, who died in battle fighting Muslims, as martyrs. The patriarch's refusal to grant this request confirmed that there would be no "Crusader's mentality" in Byzantium.

In the 11th century, Patriarch Michael Keroularios, one of the most strong-willed in the empire's history, who was said to have dyed his sandals purple (a claim on imperial power), acted against the emperor's strategic interests by excommunicating papal envoys. His actions eventually precipitated the Schism of 1054, out of which emerged separate Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Emperor Constantine XI Monomachos (r. 1042–1055), who ruled at the time, was displeased to say the least. Multiple emperors tried to heal this schism by reuniting the churches, most notably Michael VIII (r. 1259–1282) at the Council of Lyons in 1274 and John VIII (r. 1425–1448) at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–1439, but these attempts not only ended in failure but also were condemned as a betrayal of Orthodoxy.

Overall, the relationship between bishop and emperor was fluid and changing, synergistic, and, at times, antagonistic. It was complex, but it was not Caesaropapism.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; Chrysostom, John; Constantine the Great; Lecapenus, Romanus I; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; Monophysites; Muslims; *Key Events*: Great Schism; Iconoclastic Controversy; Nicaea, Council of; Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople

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Church Synods

A synod was a gathering of church leaders that took place to examine specific issues, resolve disagreements, and establish official rulings, called canons, on ecclesiastical practice and theological interpretation. The canons, then, were the laws of the church. These gatherings had their origins in the early church, which held its inaugural synod in the first century. Then, Christian leaders from Antioch and Jerusalem convened to discuss matters of practice and belief to determine the official and "correct" way. This first synod is recounted in the Bible, in the New Testament's *Acts of the Apostles* (chapter 15). Regional synods continued to take place in the following centuries to address disagreements and concerns over theological controversies, such as that of Montanus in the second century, and over practices, such as that of establishing the correct date for Easter.

These gatherings were distinguished from ecumenical, or "universal," councils, in which the entire church was understood to be present through representation of the five great patriarchates. The latter were the supreme episcopal jurisdictions of Rome, Constantinople (after 330 CE), Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch in Syria, and Jerusalem. Ecumenical councils began with the reign of Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE). Prior to his seizing control of the entire empire, Constantine had summoned a synod in Gaul in 314 CE to address the ecclesiastical problem of Donatism. This synod had significant representation from bishops in the western portion of the Roman Empire, where Constantine then exercised political control. In the same year, a regional synod was held in the eastern end of the empire, in Anatolia, at the city of Ankyra, to resolve matters of penance and to address the problem of lapsed Christians, now that the period of Christian persecution had come to an end.

After Constantine had secured control over the entire Roman Empire, differences of church practice and doctrine became central imperial concerns. The reasons for this shift were twofold: both that because emperors wanted to ensure that the "correct" teaching was being promoted and because disagreements within the Christian community could have political consequences in the empire. Beginning with Constantine, it became the Byzantine emperor's prerogative, and not a bishop's, to summon an ecumenical council. Emperors also called local synods, as did bishops, to address specific issues. Such local councils typically met in the capital of a Byzantine province, whose bishop held the title of metropolitan, but synods could also be held within the jurisdiction of the great patriarchates, presided over by a patriarch. On the most local level, bishops were expected annually to summon the clergy within their jurisdiction to address local issues and maintain proper order and discipline, just as metropolitan bishops or patriarchs could summon synods to address matters within their jurisdiction.

In addition, there was also a standing council in Constantinople, which met in the patriarch's quarters and was presided over by the patriarch. This gathering, known as the *endemousa synodos* ("resident synod"), met regularly to address matters of church law, discipline, teaching, and practice. This synod was composed of bishops appointed near Constantinople and those who were visiting the capital from farther afield. By the middle Byzantine period, participation in this synod was reserved for metropolitan bishops and other bishops from important episcopal areas, though its ranks

increased in the later Byzantine period as many bishops fled regions previously occupied by Turkish forces.

The resident synod could be summoned for imperial needs and used by the emperor against a reigning patriarch, as happened during the patriarchate of Nicephorus I (r. 806–815 CE), who resigned under pressure and was exiled, setting the stage for the restoration of Iconoclasm by Emperor Leo V in 815 CE. The synod could also be used to foil imperial interests. Patriarch Michael Keroularios summoned an episcopal meeting to counter charges of heresy leveled against him by the emissaries of Pope Leo IX (r. 1049–1054), resulting in the condemnation of the emissaries and the birth of the schism between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. This outcome was something Emperor Constantine IX (r. 1042–1055) had not intended given that he was cultivating papal support against the Normans in Italy. This synod also handled high-profile heresy trials, such as that of John Italos during the reign of Alexius Comnenus (r. 1081–1182).

When the patriarchate became vacant, it was the custom of the resident synod to propose three names to the emperor for the selection of the next patriarch, though the emperor could also select a fourth name that was not on the list. When a metropolitan bishopric became available, the synod acted likewise, submitting the names to the patriarch. In general, the standing synod functioned as an ecclesiastical body through which the patriarch maintained control over the administration.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Constantine the Great; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Great Schism; Iconoclastic Controversy; Nicaea, Council of; Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus

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Cursus Publicus

One of the hallmarks of the Roman Empire was its system of roads that spanned the provinces and served as the empire's communication and transportation network. This imperial post network, known as *cursus publicus* in Latin and *dromos* in Greek, facilitated the movement of troops and officials and the assertion of power outward

from the imperial capital. The imperial post was most extensive in the early Byzantine period, but it continued into the medieval period.

The imperial post carried messengers, officials, troops, and supplies. The post was marked by road stations (*mansiones* in Latin and *stathmoi* in Greek), located some 10 to 12 miles apart, which provided food, fresh mounts (horses, mules, oxen), carriages and carts, and other supplies for the needs of the post. A journey from the western Empire to Constantinople covered more 200 stations, and from Constantinople to Jerusalem, more than 100. A swift rider could pass five to eight stations each day. In the early Byzantine Empire, the imperial post was organized into two distinct divisions: the regular post (*cursus clabularis*) and the fast post (*cursus velox*). In general, the regular post relied on oxen and larger wagons and moved bulk goods, such as supplies for the army. The fast post utilized mules, horses, and light carts and served imperial messengers and officials. By the sixth century, the two divisions had become merged together into a single imperial post.

In the early Byzantine period, the imperial post was regulated by an official called the master of offices (*magister officiorum*), who managed the central administration of the empire. This position was eliminated by the middle Byzantine period, when the *logothetes tou dromou* had assumed supervision and control of the imperial post. The master of offices in the early period and *logothetes tou dromou* in the medieval period maintained responsibility for the management of internal security, control of foreign ambassadors, foreign policy, and court ceremonial (at least for the master of offices), and were critical advisers to the emperor. Serving the master of offices were imperial messengers called *agentes in rebus*, with approximately 1,200 in service by the fifth century. These officials kept communication moving along the imperial post, but also functioned as the eyes and ears of the imperial administration in the provinces, like a state police intelligence system, keeping tabs on the progress of imperial projects and orders, noting the activity of officials and other provincial activity, and encouraging loyalty to the emperor by rooting out disobedience.

Use of the imperial post was strictly controlled and required special authorization. Travel documents were required (called *evectiones* for the fast post and *tractoriae* for the slow), and such authorization could be granted by the master of offices or by the praetorian prefect, who oversaw provincial administration. Such authorization could also be granted by the emperor for special needs, such as for bishops attending ecumenical councils. Other imperial officials were given a small number of passes for use each year. Despite this regulation, some sections of the post were heavily congested.

The state directed local resources and labor for the maintenance of the post, which was to be managed by the provincial governor, who, in turn, left the burden with local elites known as decurions, though, with the decline of the decurial order in the later empire, this burden shifted back to the state. Towns and provinces through which the post passed were expected to maintain and supply the post and its stations as duties and taxations owed to the state. The stations were staffed locally by designated personnel, who inherited their responsibilities and were exempted from other taxes and state obligations. In times of need, the empire also demanded extra labor or supplies from local communities, as needed. In addition, the Byzantine state maintained ranches for the supply of horses, mules, and oxen and purchased necessary supplies

beyond those obtained via taxation. Given the elaborate system, the master of offices sent inspectors to each province to monitor the post and to ensure that users had proper authorization.

The costs of maintaining the imperial post were high, and the imperial government took measures to reduce this by controlling access and by closing portions that were deemed less useful. Emperor Julian (r. 361–363 CE) abolished the fast post in Sardinia. Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474 CE) eliminated the slow post in the eastern provinces, choosing instead to outsource the work of moving goods, relying on private transport rather than paying for the upkeep and maintenance of the post. In the sixth century, during the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), Praetorian Prefect John of Cappadocia prioritized fiscal prudence and terminated the imperial post in various areas to increase state revenue. In some inland regions, this had a detrimental effect on the local economy, since peasants who had previously supported the local post with their produce as part of their tax obligation now, once it was eliminated, struggled to find a way to move their product to market to raise enough revenue to make their tax payments.

The 7th century marked the end of the early Byzantine period (4th–6th centuries) and its transition into the middle period (7th–12th centuries). The cataclysmic, even if victorious, Persian War (602–629 CE), followed by the shock of the Arab invasions, which deprived Byzantium of the wealthy provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa, with Anatolia (roughly modern Turkey) barely remaining, while the Balkans were overrun by Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs, reduced and impoverished the empire. The wide-ranging imperial post, already a financial burden, was largely, though not completely, given up. A less extensive network continued, limited to Asia Minor and the Balkans. Like the medieval Byzantine government itself, this middle Byzantine imperial post was streamlined, devoid of the extensive administrative and fiscal operation of the early period, yet it continued to be operational.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Agentes in Rebus*; Master of Offices; *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Municipal Administration; Taxes; *Individuals*: Julian the Apostate; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Bulgars; Persians; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with

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De Administrando Imperio (Constantine VII) (10th century)

De Administrando Imperio (DAI), or *On the Administration of the Empire*, is a manual on diplomacy, foreign policy, history, and geography that Emperor Constantine VII (r. 913–959 CE) wrote for his son, Romanus II (r. 959–969 CE). Constantine explained

the purpose of the work in its preface, stating that the treatise will provide his son with the following:

> First, in what each nation has power to advantage the Romans [Byzantines], and in what to hurt, and how and by what other nation each severally may be encountered in arms and subdued; then, concerning their ravenous and insatiate temper and the gifts they demand inordinately; next, concerning the differences between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in . . . and moreover concerning events which have occurred at various times between the Romans and difference nations; and thereafter, what reforms have been introduced from time to time in our state, and also throughout the Roman [Byzantine] Empire. These things I have discovered of my own wisdom, and have decreed that they shall be made known unto thee, my beloved son. (Constantine VII, tr. R. Jenkins, pp. 45–47)

DAI presents a portrait of Byzantine diplomatic strategies and foreign policy concerns. In the north, it focused on the Russians and on nomadic peoples, particularly the Pechenegs, about whom the emperor wrote at great length, explaining:

> In my judgement, it is always greatly to the Imperial Government's advantage to make a point of keeping at peace with the Pecheneg nation; to make conventions and traits of friendship with them; to send an envoy to them, from here, every year with gifts of appropriate value and of kinds that the Pechenegs appreciate; and to arrange that our envoy shall bring back hostages from there—in fact, hostages and an envoy as well, to confer, in this our God-protected City, with the competent official and to receive Imperial attentions and honors in consonance with the Emperor's majesty. (Toynbee, p. 458)

The Pechenegs could be used to keep the Russians in check in the north and to punish challengers in the Balkans, notably the Bulgarians. In his material on the Balkans, Constantine included discussion of Bulgarians, Serbs, and Croats. In the east, the treatise offered an overview of Muslim history, drawn from Byzantine historical records, and examined the strategic Caucasus region, which was at the east-west crossroads of the Byzantine—Muslim world and a north-south crossroads between the steppe region of central Asia and the Near East. By contrast to the north and east, the treatise gave much less attention to matters in the west, though it did include a discussion of Italy and Venice.

Born in 905 CE, Emperor Constantine VII ruled independently from 945–959 CE. He was the son of Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE) and Leo's mistress, and subsequently fourth wife, Zoe Karbonopsina. To secure his position, Leo needed an heir, and his first three wives, in succession, had died trying to produce one. Since even three marriages were banned by the Orthodox Church, a fourth was considered scandalous. This generated a major political and religious controversy but was eventually resolved and the baby was accepted as legitimate and was baptized. Since Zoe gave

birth in the imperial birthing chamber, which was immersed in purple (the color representing the imperial office), Constantine was known as Porphyrogenitus (meaning "born in the purple") to emphasize his legitimacy. During his teenage years, though he had already been crowned coemperor in 908 CE, a regency governed in Constantine's name and then imperial power passed into the hands of Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE), who was the supreme admiral of the Byzantine navy. Romanus secured his position by marrying his own daughter, Helen, to Constantine VII, who continued to be kept out of the halls of power for the next two decades. During this time, Constantine immersed himself in the patronage and pursuit of literary and cultural activities, which he continued during his reign.

Many literary works derive from the era of Constantine VII, either by his encouragement and patronage or by his own hand. These include two histories that provide the historical background to the emergence of Constantine's Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056 CE), one by Genesios, which covers the period from the early ninth century through the reign of Basil I (r. 867–886 CE), founder of the dynasty, and the other, part of the collection known as the *Theophanes Continuatus*, reaching into Constantine's own day. Constantine VII took it into his own hands to write an official biography of his grandfather Basil I, cleansing the record of any unsavory details and revealing the divine plan at work that brought Basil and the dynasty to power.

Much intellectual energy was also invested in the production of manuals that had practical value, including a work on provincial administration (*De Thematibus*, or *On Themes*, theme being the term used for a Byzantine province), a treatise on imperial ceremonies (*De Ceremoniis*), a lexicon of ancient Greek that functioned like a medieval encyclopedia (*Souda*), and a compilation of ancient agricultural knowledge (*Geoponika*). These important works reflect Byzantine interest in organizing and compiling knowledge in the 9th and 10th centuries, after the traumatic periods of the 7th and 8th centuries, which created a serious disruption with the cultural and intellectual traditions of late antiquity. This gathering and organizing of knowledge established a foundation of learning that would blossom in 11th- and 12th-century Byzantine culture and literature. It is in the light of preservation and practicality that we can view Constantine's *On the Administration of the Empire (De Administrando Imperio)*. He believed that use of such manuals would guide the educated person to choose the best course of action, something acutely necessary for the emperor. For the treatise, Constantine drew on existing Byzantine historical texts, government records, and information gathered from foreign ambassadors and Byzantine officials.

Constantine did not give a title to his treatise, as far as we know today. The unnamed Greek manuscript was catalogued in the early modern period and was given the Latin title *De Administrando Imperio*, by which it has since been known.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Organization and Administration*: Environment; *Individuals*: Lecapenus, Romanus I; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Khazars; Muslims; *Military*: Themes

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Diplomacy

Diplomacy played a critical role in the success and long-term survival of the Byzantine state, which faced the necessity of defending frontiers that crossed Europe, Asia, and, up to the 7th century, Africa. On its eastern frontier, the empire confronted powerful neighbors in the Sassanid Persians, from the 3rd to the 7th centuries, and their Muslim successors, from the early Caliphate to the Seljuq and Ottoman Turks. For the security of the empire from this direction, the Caucasus region, strategically positioned at the crossroads of both empires, was a particularly important sphere of diplomacy, declining in importance only with the loss of Anatolia (approximately the Asian portion of the modern nation of Turkey) in the later Byzantine period. From the north, the empire witnessed a steady stream of new peoples who threatened, moved through, or even settled in the Balkans, including Germans in the 4th and 5th centuries, Slavs from the 6th century onward, and a host of nomadic peoples from central Asia, including the Huns, Avars, Bulgars, and Pechenegs. In the west, the empire was challenged by Germanic tribes who assumed power over its western provinces, and after Justinian's 6th-century reconquest of North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and some of Spain, it faced the new dilemma of defending territories far removed from Constantinople. The empire later lost North Africa to the Arabs in the 7th century, Sicily in the 9th century, much of northern Italy to Germanic Lombards in the 6th century, and southern Italy to the Normans in the 11th century.

To manage a millennium of challenges, the imperial government employed a range of strategies for the security of the empire. Constantinople sought information and intelligence on neighboring peoples and, armed with this tactic, supported pro-Byzantine parties and policies. The emperor also recruited tribes or kingdoms against a common foe, which was reflected in Emperor Constantine VII's 10th-century treatise known as *On the Administration of the Empire.* This strategy was frequently used, whether inciting Ostrogothic King Theodoric to move from the Balkans to Italy to dethrone the Germanic ruler Odoacer in the 5th century, drawing on Bulgars and Khazars against Arabs in the 8th century, calling nomadic Pechenegs against Bulgaria in the 9th and 10th centuries, or securing Venetian assistance against Normans in the 11th century. Of particular importance was the empire's desire to avoid simultaneous hostility on multiple frontiers, although this situation could not always be prevented. Accompanying much of this diplomatic activity were treaties that clearly stipulated terms and obligations, such as borders, trading privileges, payment of tribute, mutual

Byzantine emperors often received ambassadors from neighboring peoples to sign treaties which established borders, trading privileges, payment of tribute, mutual defense pacts, and return of hostages. In this 15th-century illumination from the Razdiwill Chronicle, Emperor John I Tzismiskes meets with the representatives of Sviatoslav I of Kiev. (Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images)

SULTAN ALP ARSLAN

The Seljuqs were a central Asian tribe of the Oghuz Turks who converted to Sunni Islam in the 10th century. In the 11th century, the Seljuqs moved from central Asia to southwest Asia and seized control of Persia and Mesopotamia. The Seljuq ruler, Tughril Beg, received the title of "Sultan" from the caliph in Baghdad, who legitimized Seljuq political power in the Islamic world. Alp Arslan, nephew of Tughril Beg, became sultan in 1063 and instituted important structural changes that moved Seljuq power from its nomadic foundation to an Islamic state. The sultan adopted a Persian bureaucracy, which was overseen by a chief minister, Nizam al-Mulk, who became his *wazir* (vizier). Alp Arslan also created a salaried standing army of 10,000 to 15,000 soldiers, who were supplemented by many thousands of nomadic Turkic warriors. The latter were unpaid and sought to gain riches by pillaging pasture land and by pressing the conquests farther. It was the latter nomads who began incursions into Byzantine Anatolia, without coordination from the sultan. Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes responded by leading an army to stem the tide. The sultan was then embarking on an expedition to the south against the Shi'ite Fatimids but was forced to respond to the Byzantine advance toward his rear into eastern Anatolia. The resulting Byzantine defeat at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 opened Anatolia to Turkish migration and the beginning of the Turkification of the region.

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defense pacts, and the return of hostages. The empire also kept royal hostages in the capital to ensure fidelity; in fact, Theodoric the Ostrogoth had been one such hostage, spending a decade in Constantinople.

Marriages were another diplomatic strategy but not always successful. In the 7th and 8th centuries, emperors married Khazar princesses to strengthen the Byzantine-Khazar bond, signifying their mutual antagonism to the Arabs. At the turn of the 9th century, an emperor was engaged to the daughter of the Frankish ruler Charlemagne, who himself proposed marriage to Empress Irene (r. 797–802 CE), though neither arrangement came to fruition. The latter would have resolved, at least for the time being, the diplomatic problem created when the pope crowned the king of the Franks as Roman emperor, since there was already an emperor in Constantinople, as there had been since the 4th century, but none in the west since the 5th century. Thereafter, Byzantine rulers stressed their titles as emperor *of the Romans*, if tolerating (by necessity) the use of an imperial title for a western comrade. In the 10th century, Byzantine princesses were wed to a Bulgar khan, a Russian prince, and a German emperor. For the latter, Bishop Liudprand of Cremona (in Italy) served as ambassador to Constantinople and sought a marriage alliance for his patron, German Emperor Otto I (r. 962–973 CE). Liudprand described how the Byzantine state kept close control over foreign ambassadors, from their entry into the empire, to their lodging and movements in Constantinople, and to their placement at imperial ceremonies, with proximity to (or distance from) the emperor reflecting their relative importance from the empire's perspective (which differed greatly from Liudprand's time). This control of foreign diplomats was under the authority of a high official called *logothetes tou dromou*, during Liudprand's day, and the *magister officiorum* ("master of offices") in the early Byzantine period. While Liudprand was not successful under Nicephorus II Phocas in 968 CE, the following emperor, John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976 CE), sent a bride to marry Otto II (r. 980–983 CE). By the 12th century, such international marriages became commonplace as Byzantium sought alliances with Crusader kingdoms, Hungary, and other western states, and in the 14th century a bride even secured an alliance with the Ottomans.

Emperors drew on vast resources to provide tribute or other payments to keep challengers in check, regularly paying vast sums rather than risking even more on the field of battle. In the 5th century, the Huns, under the leadership of Attila, squeezed as much revenue as possible from Constantinople, which paid more than 2,000 pounds of gold by 445 CE, trading gold for peace. When Constantinople finally refused to continue payments, Attila turned his vengeance on the more exposed West, rather than try to continue to bleed the stronger East. Such 5th-century challenges prompted the fortification of Constantinople with massive land walls that are still visible in Istanbul today. The city's land walls, which would not be breached by a foreign enemy until the 15th century, further strengthened the effectiveness of Byzantine diplomacy. The emperor also used the empire's resources to subsidize allies. For example, Justinian paid the Ghassanids, an allied Arab group, to protect Byzantium's desert frontier against other Arab peoples. The end of these subsidies came in the 7th century due to

the economic ruin wrought by the devastating Persian War and facilitated Arab conquests shortly thereafter.

Missionary efforts were aligned with state interests to win the "hearts and minds" of neighboring peoples. Byzantine missionaries were active in central and Eastern Europe, bringing Serbs, Bulgarians, and Russians into the Byzantine cultural and religious orbit, though it did not yield wholly pacific results. By adjusting religious policy, emperors could also secure stronger diplomatic ties. In 519 CE, Emperor Justin I, likely working in concert with nephew Justinian, restored the theological union between Constantinople and Rome, ending nearly four decades of schism. This realignment created political anxiety for the Ostrogothic ruler of Italy, who was an Arian and not a Catholic/Orthodox Christian. This union foreshadowed the Byzantine reconquest of Italy to follow.

The Schism of 1054, which rendered Orthodox and Catholic into separate churches, ultimately provided another tool for the emperor's diplomatic kit. With the increased power of the papacy in the west after the 11th century, emperors could propose a union of the churches to diplomatic ends, particularly in the late Byzantine period. At the Council of Lyons in 1274, Michael VIII (r. 1259–1282) prevented an impending assault by the armies of Charles of Anjou, ruler of southern Italy and Sicily, by agreeing to a union (through his imperial envoys). His actions were seen as unacceptable in the eyes of the Orthodox population, who came to detest the Catholic Church after the armies of the Fourth Crusade conquered Constantinople in 1204. Michael delayed implementation of the union as long as possible, but when papal patience ran out and

ARMENIA BETWEEN PERSIA AND BYZANTIUM

The Sassanian Dynasty of Persia and the Byzantine Empire contested control of the strategically located Caucasus region, which lay between them. The Armenian Kingdom was but one of the indigenous entities within this diverse region. The Armenians had a distinct language and culture but were also influenced by both the Persian and Roman Empires, each of which sought to gain the upper hand in the region. The Armenians were ruled by the Arsacid dynasty, which was a branch of a Parthian family that had ruled Persia before the Sassanians. Yet, they adopted Christianity under King Trdat III, who converted shortly before the conversion of Emperor Constantine in the Roman Empire. Trdat appointed Gregory the Illuminator, who was responsible for his conversion, as the first catholicos, or presiding bishop, of the church in Armenia. The catholicos in the Armenian city of Etchmiadzin remains the chief cleric of the Armenian Orthodox Church. This conversion later inspired the invention of a new alphabet for the Armenian language, which is distinct from the Greek alphabet of Byzantium or the Sassanian script and remains in use for the Armenian language today. Armenian cultural identity was strong, and Armenians stood their ground against Persian attempts to convert the region to Zoroastrianism in the fifth century. This region was an important recruiting ground for Byzantium and many Byzantine emperors, and leading families in the middle Byzantine period were of Armenian descent.

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Charles again prepared to invade, Michael used Byzantine gold to foment rebellion in Sicily. Doing so, for the second time, he prevented an invasion by Charles. The rebellion was followed by an invasion of Sicily by Peter of Aragon, which ended Charles's threat to the empire. The union was then repudiated by Michael's son and successor, Andronikos II (r. 1282–1328).

In 1438–1439, when Ottoman power seemed insurmountable, Emperor John VIII (r. 1425–1448) agreed anew for union at the Council of Ferrara-Florence. A crusade followed but was defeated by the Ottomans at Varna in 1444. The failure of the crusade and the unwillingness of the Byzantine population to accept union with the Catholic Church, which was viewed as an unjust and unprincipled subordination of Orthodoxy, further weakened the position of the state. Nevertheless, it was alleged at least that Byzantium had an ally in the inner circle of Sultan Mehmet II, who was then besieging the city. Despite this last-ditch effort, the Ottoman forces assembled against the city in 1453 were simply too great for the emperor's diplomacy and the city's walls, a powerful combination that preserved the empire for a millennium.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *De Administrando Imperio* (Constantine VII); Master of Offices; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Irene; Justinian; Liudprand of Cremona; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Bulgars; Franks; Khazars; Muslims; Normans; *Key Events*: Charlemagne, Coronation of; Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Fourth Crusade; Great Schism; Islam, Expansion of; Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Manzikert, Battle of; Persia, Wars with; Rome, Fall of; Second Crusade; Sicilian Vespers; *Key Places*: Bulgaria; Walls of Theodosius (Constantinople); *Primary Documents*: Document 22

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Eastern Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church is the Christian community that adheres to "correct belief" (Greek, o*rthodoxia*) as expressed in its theology, institutions, and practices, which are rooted in scripture and the early history of Christianity. It is articulated and defined by the Seven Ecumenical (or "Universal") Councils, which were held in the Byzantine Empire from 325 to 787 CE. From a historical perspective, the emergence of Orthodoxy is related to the cultural rift between the Greek East and Latin West in the

Roman Empire, which by the late third century was divided in half, with an emperor in each.

In the first centuries of Christianity, bishops assumed leadership in the church. By the fifth century, five particularly powerful bishops, called patriarchs, had emerged and presided over the church in the Roman world. These were the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch in Syria, and Jerusalem. Each patriarch wielded jurisdiction over a large territory, supervising the many subordinate bishops in his region. Thus, four were in the east and only one, for Rome, was in the Latin West. These five bishops, known collectively as the Pentarchy, worked together through ecumenical councils to establish correct doctrine and practice for Christianity.

Also, during the fifth century, the western portion of the Roman Empire passed under the control of various Germanic tribes, breaking the west into many separate Germanic kingdoms. Meanwhile, there was no parallel loss in the east, where an emperor continued to reign in Constantinople for the next millennium. The empire did experience loss with the emergence of Islam, when in the seventh century Arab armies conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa, transforming the Mediterranean into a contested frontier zone, where it had once been a Roman sea. These political events had important consequences for Christianity. Cultural, economic, and political links between the eastern and (formerly) western regions of the Roman Empire were weakened or even severed. As a result, Christianity developed differently in each region, most obviously in the language of use: Latin in the west, Greek (and Syriac and Coptic) in the east. While the role of the Pentarchy and the reliance on the gathering of the patriarchs at ecumenical councils would remain a distinguishing feature of the Orthodox Church, the west came to view the bishop of Rome as the supreme figure in the church, which soon also became the Catholic position.

In the perspective of the Orthodox Church, Rome was recognized as having only the highest place of *honor* among patriarchs but possessing no more authority or power than any other. The patriarch of Constantinople was held to be equal in authority, as established by the ecumenical councils, despite misgivings from Rome. In the sixth century, the bishop of Constantinople began using the title "ecumenical patriarchate," again with Rome protesting. More significant tension emerged during the Iconoclast period (726–843 CE), when Byzantine rulers banned religious images, furthering the rift between East and West. Rome shifted its political vision away from Constantinople, forging a new western orientation, and secured an alliance with the Franks. By 800 CE, the bishop of Rome even crowned a Frankish king, Charlemagne, as Roman emperor. Related to these events was a competitive effort to convert Slavic peoples in central and Eastern Europe; missionaries were sent from the west and from Constantinople. While Byzantine success in central Europe was overturned by western opposition, this missionary effort to the Slavs bore fruit in the Balkans with the conversion of the Bulgarians and Serbs (and then the Russians in the 10th century). The bishop of Rome protested that the Balkans were within his jurisdiction, but Constantinople gained ecclesiastical supervision. In this 9th-century struggle, Pope

Nicholas I asserted the supremacy of the bishop of Rome throughout the church, which Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, rejected. Photius also wrote a treatise condemning western practices that differed from eastern norms, about which he learned from missionaries involved in these struggles. This conflict revealed the extent to which the two halves of Christianity had diverged.

These differences were again emphasized in the 11th century, when the papacy vigorously and successfully asserted its supremacy in the West. This conflict devolved into the Schism of 1054, when mutual excommunications effectively created two separate churches: Catholic in the west and Orthodox in the east. Up until that time, despite tensions and relatively short-term separations, the two were bound together as one ecclesiastical community.

The central issues were the following:

1. The Nicene Creed. The Western church had modified this creed that had been established by the First and Second Ecumenical Councils in the fourth century. The Nicene Creed stated that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father, but the Western church, in the centuries following, added as clarification "and the Son" (*Filioque,* in Latin), where it had not been in the original Greek creed. Orthodox theologians viewed this change as complicating understanding of the Trinity and as a usurpation of the authority of an ecumenical council. *Filioque* became a major source of controversy.
2. Bread in the Eucharist. The Catholic Church used unleavened bread in the Eucharist during its liturgical services, whereas the Orthodox Church used leavened bread.
3. Clerical Celibacy. The Orthodox Church allowed married men to become priests unless they were unmarried at ordination, in which case they had to remain celibate. The Catholic Church required all priests, bishops, and monks to be celibate. The Orthodox Church compelled celibacy for monks and bishops only.
4. Equality of Patriarchs. The Orthodox Church maintained the equality of patriarchs, respecting Rome only as first among equals, not as superior in authority. The Catholic Church viewed the bishop of Rome as the supreme authority in Christianity.

There were other points of disagreement, though less central to the conflict, including fasting during Lent, the notion of original sin, and a willingness to accept other languages in the church. The Orthodox Church accommodated new languages for scripture and liturgy and, in fact, invented a script for the Slavic language, translating the Bible and other texts into Slavonic in the ninth century. The descendent of this alphabet is still used for the Serbian, Bulgarian, and Russian languages today and is known as Cyrillic after Saint Cyril, who invented it. Cyril and his brother, Methodius, became known as the Apostles to the Slavs. In contrast, the Catholic Church demanded Latin for such purposes, even among newly converted peoples like the Slavs, Hungarians, and Scandinavians. There were still other differences, such as in architecture and

art, particularly the Orthodox devotion to icons, but these were not part of the central conflict.

The Schism of 1054 was only an ecclesiological rift, but it was the Crusades that immediately followed (11th–13th centuries) that transformed this theological dispute into a permanent cultural divide. The First, Second, and Third Crusades hurled Catholic armies through Constantinople, each causing greater tensions and increasing threat levels to the empire, even as their purported aim was the Holy Land. Crusader ideology was foreign to the Orthodox world, and western soldiers and clergy progressively made the Catholic west appear hostile to Orthodoxy. This view was confirmed by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, when a Catholic crusading army assaulted and conquered Constantinople, imposing a Catholic emperor and patriarch on the city and carving up the empire.

In this 11th-century image, the central figure of the emperor illustrates the idea of Caesaropapism—that the Byzantine emperor, not the church, held supreme power over religious affairs of the empire. At left, the archangel Michael declares that the emperor's authority over the Byzantine Church was granted by Christ and not an earthly institution. (DeAgostini/Getty Images)

In 1261, an Orthodox emperor retook the city, but by this time the military and economic power of the West was vastly greater than that of the Byzantine Empire. And so, emperors needed Western help against the Turks and were forced to leverage a reunion of the churches as payment for military assistance. These attempts were highly unpopular and ended in failure, serving only to increase the ire of the Orthodox, who feared Catholic power, believing that this would require a rejection of Orthodoxy, as seen in 1204. This fear was so great that some even voiced a preference for Ottoman Muslim rather than Catholic rule, since the former would tolerate Orthodox tradition, while the latter rejected it. Sultan Mehmet II, who conquered Constantinople in 1453, was aware of this Catholic-Orthodox conflict. He brought the Byzantine empire to an end, but protected the Orthodox Church, which entered a new phase of its history. The Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate is still present in Constantinople (Istanbul) and remains in communion with fellow Orthodox bishops in Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, and beyond.

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ROMANOS THE MELODIST

Often viewed as Byzantium's greatest poet, Romanus was born in Emesa (modern Homs) in Syria and served as a deacon in Beirut. He was influenced by the Syriac Christian tradition of chanting sermons in verse. He moved to Constantinople during the reign of Anastasius and served at the Church of the Theotokos, where he was inspired to embark on this his poetic project. Unlike Byzantine poets of the fourth century, who often drew on classical models for Christian poems, Romanus struck out in an innovative direction, popularizing a new poetic form that became known as the *kontakion*. This consisted of a prelude and then 18 to 24 stanzas, each of which had the same metrical pattern. The first letter of each stanza formed an acrostic, which spelled the poet's name, such as "of the Humble Romanos." Between each stanza was a refrain, which was likely sung by the congregation, while only the cantor sang the stanzas. These hymns drew on biblical themes but expanded the biblical narrative by composing dialogue between biblical (and nonbiblical) figures, through which the poet creatively and dramatically instructed listeners in Orthodox theology. While there are more than 80 hymns attributed to Romanus, accurate attribution of many of these is in doubt. His most famous hymn is entitled "On the Nativity I," which is a dialogue between the Virgin Mary and the visiting Magi, who have found the newborn Jesus.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; *Individuals*: Methodius and Cyril, Apostles to the Slavs; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Franks; *Key Events*: Charlemagne, Coronation of; Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; Rome, Fall of; Second Crusade; *Key Places*: Antioch; Bulgaria

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Ecumenical Church Councils

Ecumenical (meaning "universal") councils were assemblies of Christian leaders in which the entire church was understood to be present through representation by the five great patriarchates, or supreme episcopal jurisdictions. Since the first century, Christian communities had employed gatherings of leaders, or councils, to decide matters of theology and practice, but from the reign of Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE), such matters became imperial concerns because Christian emperors wanted to ensure

that the "correct" teaching was being promoted, and disagreements in the Christian community could bear political consequences in the empire. Starting with Constantine, it became the Byzantine emperor's, and not a bishop's, prerogative to summon the empire's bishops for such a council.

In 325 CE, Constantine mustered the bishops of the empire for the Council of Nicaea to clarify the relationship of Jesus, the Son, to God, the Father. Arius, a priest at Alexandria, had taught that the Son was a created being, and that His creation occurred before the world, before time itself had even existed. This teaching won many prominent ecclesiastical supporters but also raised the voices of opponents, such as Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and his young secretary, Athanasius, who later succeeded him as bishop. For the opponents of Arianism (the theology of Arius), the Son was eternally begotten from the Father's own substance and was not a created being. Local councils in Egypt and Palestine addressed this concern but, with one supporting and one opposing the idea, did not resolve the dispute.

The theological division was not confined to elite debates but had a social and political impact. Bishops were often powerful figures in their cities, and riots could occur if a bishop was challenged. Constantine, having just obtained sole control of the empire by defeating his rival in the East, inherited this controversy raging there. After his initial attempts to resolve it failed, Constantine summoned bishops to Nicaea, which was very close to Constantinople. Several hundred showed up, with tradition (if not history) assigning a count of 318 total present. The emperor covered the cost of travel, opened the council, and influenced its proceedings. The council condemned Arianism and decreed that the Son was of the same nature ("homoousios") as the Father. The council issued a creed, a statement that the faithful could recite and easily memorize, to learn *correct* theology. The

The Council of Constantinople, assembled by Emperor Theodosius I and convened in 381 CE, was the second ecumenical council of the Christian Church that condemned Arianism and affirmed Nicene Christianity. It gave Constantinople religious authority over Alexandria and Antioch. The emperor presides over the Council in this ninth-century Latin manuscript. (Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Image)

council also took up other issues, establishing rules (called canons) on discipline and practice, including the calculation for the correct date for Easter (over which there had been disagreement), ecclesiastical jurisdiction and governance, and various rules for clergy.

After Nicaea, Arianism continued to influence bishops and emperors in the fourth century. Thus, in 381 CE, Emperor Theodosius I summoned at Constantinople the Second Ecumenical Council, which again addressed the matter. The Council of Constantinople rejected Arianism and added further Trinitarian language to Nicene Creed, which took on its present form:

> We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

As with Nicaea, the council also established canons on matters of discipline and church organization, including recognizing the bishop of Constantinople, who was officially founded in 330 CE as one of the great leaders of the empire, second only to Rome.

The Third Ecumenical Council took place at Ephesus, located on the western coast of Anatolia about 300 miles from Constantinople. It was called to deliberate the theology of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who believed that the divine and human natures in Jesus should be understood as separated and so, he argued, the Virgin Mary should be called "Christ-bearer," having given birth only to the human person of Jesus, and not "God-bearer" (*Theotokos*), as she was already known. This position was vigorously opposed by Bishop Cyril of Alexandria, who dominated the council. Cyril argued that, according to scripture, the Word of God had been made flesh and so, Mary had given birth to God *and* man in the person of Jesus. Cyril won the day, leaving Nestorius to be deposed and his theology to be condemned.

Christology (the study of the natures of Christ) continued to be a source of debate and controversy after Ephesus. How was the relationship between Christ's human and

divine natures to be explained? Alexandrian theologians began to see the divine nature as absorbing the human so that it was possible to speak of one nature in Christ, a position called Monophysite ("one nature"). To address this dispute, Emperor Marcian (r. 450–457 CE) summoned the Fourth Ecumenical Council to Chalcedon, just across the Bosporus strait from Constantinople, in 451 CE. Here, Monophysite theology was condemned and Christ was defined as from and in two natures (truly human and truly divine), but with a unity nonetheless, without division or separation. The council also addressed matters of governance, including the subordination of monks to bishops in their jurisdictions and setting church precedence, thus decreeing that the bishop of Jerusalem was the fifth great leader of Christendom, behind Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch. More controversially, the Council declared that Constantinople was second in place, but equal to, Rome in all but honor. The church in Egypt would struggle to accept Chalcedon and largely rejected it. This disagreement created the first major schism in the Christian world, with much of Egypt and Syria, along with Armenia and Ethiopia, embracing a Monophysite, rather than Chalcedonian, theology.

Afterward, emperors tried to bridge this theological divide to keep both Rome (pro-Chalcedon) and Alexandria (anti-Chalcedon) in union with Constantinople. Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) summoned the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 CE, held at Constantinople, to find unity by further clarifying Chalcedon but failed to heal the divide. In the seventh century, Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) proposed a compromise that, regardless of Christ's one or two natures, Jesus had only one will, a position called Monotheletism ("one will"). This position, too, was unsuccessful and later condemned at the Sixth Ecumenical Council, also held at Constantinople in 681 CE. There would be no reconciliation between the Monophysite and Chalcedonian theologies.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council, held again at Nicaea in 787 CE, was summoned by Empress Irene (regent 780–790 CE, empress 797–802 CE) to address Iconoclasm, which viewed religious images as a violation of the Bible's Second Commandment. Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE) imposed Iconoclasm on the empire, where it continued for more than 50 years. Nicaea II condemned these actions and declared that religious images were not graven images but rather provided a means for proper Christian practice to give veneration to saints represented through images, while reserving worship (rather than veneration) for God alone. As with the lingering of Arianism, it took time to fully defeat the Iconoclast idea, but after a brief revival in the ninth century, it was eliminated, and icons have become a permanent and distinguishing feature of the Orthodox Church since. Nicaea II was the last council accepted as ecumenical by both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Eastern Orthodox Church; *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; Constantine the Great; Heraclius; Irene; Justinian; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; Monophysites; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Iconoclastic

Controversy; Nicaea, Council of; Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus; Three Chapters Controversy

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Factions, Political

Eleventh-century Byzantium provides a stark contrast between the state's wealth and power of the state at the end of the reign of Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE) and its bankruptcy and military collapse in the 1070s. To explain this breakdown, George Ostrogorsky, one of the formative historians of Byzantium, argued that the source of the problem was political factionalism between "civilian" and "military" families. "Civilian" referred to aristocratic families whose power emanated through the highest positions in the state's civil administration in Constantinople. They directed state policy and were patrons of culture and scholarship but were not military figures.

"Military" aristocrats were those families who dominated military leadership and regularly led Byzantine armies. (Note that the reality is less precise than these terms may suggest. Members of "civilian" families might serve in military posts and "military" families in the civil administration, and all could be patrons of culture. Thus, this entry will continue to use quotations around each term.) With only brief exceptions, "civilian" emperors prevailed from 1025 to 1078. While Byzantine culture flourished during the century, military investment was reduced precisely when dangerous new adversaries were emerging on each of the empire's frontiers: Normans in the west, Pechenegs in the Balkans, and Turks in the east.

In 976 CE, at the start of Basil II's reign, Bardas Skleros, the empire's chief military commander, rebelled. Skleros was from an influential aristocratic "military" family. Such families had dominated the early years of Basil II, under generals who became emperor: Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963–969 CE) and John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976 CE). Bardas sought to ensure the continuance of this precedent for his own family and rallied much of Anatolia to his cause. To confront this challenge, Basil II turned to Bardas Phocas, from a rival aristocratic family. Phocas defeated Skleros, who then fled across the imperial frontier, taking refuge with the Muslim Caliphate.

In 987 CE, Skleros returned to try for the imperial throne a second time, and Basil again turned to Phocas. This time, however, Phocas arrested Skleros and then raised the flag of rebellion, declaring himself emperor. Drawing on Byzantium's diplomatic

expertise, Basil II obtained 6,000 Russian troops from Vladimir of Kiev (r. 980–1015 CE) in return for a marriage between Vladimir and Basil's sister Anna. In 989 CE, fortified by this Varangian Guard, Basil defeated Phocas, who died on the battlefield, but Skleros continued the struggle before finally surrendering. For Basil II, these civil wars made absolutely clear the urgent need to keep powerful aristocratic "military" families under control. Their provincial ties and influence, combined with their hold on military positions, threatened imperial power. The wars also revealed the intense and bitter rivalries of aristocratic families.

For the rest of his reign, Basil led armies himself and in collaboration with military commanders promoted from less powerful provincial families to expand the territory of the state. Basil campaigned in the Balkans, repeatedly, as well as in the Caucasus, and was planning an Italian campaign when he died in 1025. For Ostrogorsky, the Byzantine state reached its apogee of power during this reign. Basil had strengthened and extended the frontiers, protected peasants from the depredations of the aristocratic families, checked the power of the latter, and passed on a full treasury to his successors, who soon squandered his legacy.

According to Ostrogorsky, Basil's successors abandoned the very principles and policies that had made the Byzantine state powerful. Since Basil had no children, power passed to his, brother, Constantine VIII (r. 1025–1028) and then to Constantine's daughter Zoe who married, in succession, three members of the "civilian" aristocracy: Romanus III Argyros (r. 1028–1034), Michael IV Paphlagonian (r. 1034–1041), and Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1041–1055). These emperors lifted Basil's limitation on powerful families and made legal their encroachment on peasant lands. These emperors also lacked military experience, making them willing to support measures to reduce military spending by demobilizing thousands of troops and turning soldiers into taxpayers, which would increase state revenue, even while there were growing threats surrounding the empire. Yet, Romanus III craved military glory, but his inept leadership was spared disaster only by a highly effective general named George Maniakes.

These emperors spent their wealth lavishly, and cultural life flourished under their reign. The Byzantine court was home to highly educated, classically trained courtiers who were scholars, jurists, poets, historians, and rhetoricians. A member of this group was Michael Psellos, one of the most important and creative authors in Byzantine history, who wrote works on diverse topics, including history, philosophy, law, medicine, rhetoric, and theology. In his masterful *Chronographia*, a biographical history of the century, Psellos provides an account of the period from a perspective of the civil administration. He condemns the imperial decision to taint the Senate by admitting to it members from previously banned classes, such as merchants and businessmen. This cultural disdain revealed the bias of the Constantinopolitan elite. While Byzantine society was flourishing, the state needed revenue, and the admission of these new senators demonstrated the economic importance of this segment of society. This expansion did not fully meet the financial need, however, and the state began to debase the Byzantine currency.

In its quest for revenue, the state squeezed the provinces with increased taxation, while projecting a less potent military presence. This combination provoked revolts in

the Balkans in the 1030s and 1040s and even by disaffected Byzantine generals, including George Maniakes in 1043. Faced with revolts, nomadic incursions in the Balkans, Turkic pressure in the east, and growing tensions with the Normans in the west, Isaac I Comnenus (r. 1057–1059), from the "military" aristocracy, became emperor in 1057. Isaac launched reforms at a blistering pace, seeking to strengthen the army, keep foreign enemies in check, and establish financial solvency. His many-pronged reform effort alienated much of Byzantine society, including the civil aristocracy (he reduced salaries and pensions), the church leadership (he tried to limit resources passing to monasteries), and the populace (he levied new taxes and sought unpaid ones). Faced with nearly universal opposition, his chief minister, Michael Psellos, encouraged him to retire to a monastery, which allowed for the return of the "civilian" aristocracy with the reign of Constantine X Doukas (r. 1059–1067), whom Psellos readily served. Constantine spent extravagantly on court and culture, while virtually ignoring the military.

By the death of Constantine X, the international situation was extremely perilous and could no longer be ignored: a military leader was desperately needed after years of neglect. Empress Eudokia, Constantine's widow, agreed to marry a general who then became Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes (r. 1068–1071). Romanus quickly focused efforts on rebuilding the army, which he led in person, and confronted the Turks in eastern Anatolia. In 1071 CE, at the Battle of Manzikert, Romanus was sabotaged by a Norman commander's treachery and by a rumor of the emperor's death started by Andronikos Doukas, a member of a "civilian" aristocratic family. The Byzantine army was defeated, and the emperor became captive of Seljuq Sultan Alp Arslan (r. 1063–1072).

Assuming that the emperor was dead, Constantine's son Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071–1078) was declared emperor. The fact was, however, that Romanus IV was still alive. He had come to terms with Sultan Alp Arslan and, with treaty in hand, returned to Constantinople. But there would be no welcome homecoming. Michael arrested Romanus and had him so violently blinded that he died soon thereafter. If "military" Emperor Romanus IV had sought to address the military situation directly, "civilian" Emperor Michael VII chose to ignore it. His reign left unresolved the pressing financial and military problems and his policies stirred unrest and revolt, allowing the Turks to gain mastery over most of Anatolia.

In the face of this disastrous situation, Michael retired to a monastery and an elderly general and "military" aristocrat named Nicephorus III Votaneiates became emperor (r. 1078–1081). He was unable to stem the Turkish tide and was overthrown by a younger general who had forged an alliance of powerful families. Emperor Alexius Comnenus (r. 1081–1182) led armies in the field and established the military situation and Byzantine finances, but his means of doing so dramatically changed the structure of the Byzantine state and its relationship with powerful aristocratic families.

While Ostrogorsky relied on an explanation of "civilian" and "military" factions to explain the period, his notion of decline has been challenged. Scholars have since studied the Byzantine economy, which flourished in the period, and offered a rationale for the policies of the "civilian" emperors, who struggled to access that revenue. Even the concept of distinct categories of "civilian" and "military" has been disputed

as more illusion than reality. This duality sets up a simple and convenient narrative, as presented in this entry, but is not universally accepted. What is clear is that there was tremendous factionalism among elites and great competition between aristocratic families, out of which emerged the Comnenus Dynasty (1081–1185).

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Taxes; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; *Groups and Organizations: Dynatoi*; Normans; Political Parties; *Key Events*: Manzikert, Battle of; *Military*: Varangian Guard

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John the Lydian (ca. 490–ca. 570 CE)

John the Lydian (Ioannes Lydos) was a member of a local elite, or curial, family from the city of Philadelphia in the region of Lydia in western Asia Minor. His most important extant work, written about 550 CE, is *De Magistratibus* (*On Magistrates*), a Latin history of the civil administrative office of the praetorian prefect from the founding of Rome to the mid-sixth century CE.

Equipped with a solid education and fluency in Greek and Latin, John the Lydian moved to Constantinople in the early sixth century, when he was 21 years old. He hoped to find a position as a legal secretary in a department under the master of offices, the head of the imperial government's civil administration. The challenge before him was the pool of many qualified candidates who also sought such entry positions, but John benefited from particularly good fortune.

A fellow Lydian named Zoticus held a senior position in the office of the praetorian prefect, the bureau that oversaw the provincial administration. Zoticus became John's benefactor, taking him on his staff as a shorthand writer and initiating his career in the imperial government. Within the year, John's patron had secured his advancement to first secretary (*chartoularios*), working in a department of legal affairs. Unlike his fellow colleagues in this position, John did not buy the post but earned it, thanks to the patronage of his countryman, a fact that he was quite proud of. Zoticus's support did not end there; he even found a wife for the young man, giving him his own daughter's hand. John's career in the civil service spanned 40 years and, thanks to his prodigious learning, included an imperial appointment as a professor in

Constantinople. John's work provides a contemporary perspective on the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) and his uncle and imperial predecessor Justin (r. 518–527 CE), under whom Justinian exercised great influence.

John was one of the many authors who abounded in the age of Justinian, whose works still survive, among whom were Procopius of Caesarea, who wrote a history of Justinian's wars, a work on the empire-wide building activity of Justinian, and a scandalous private account of his reign; Agathias, who continued the historical narrative of Procopius; John Malalas, who wrote the first Byzantine chronicle (a year-by-year history); Evagrius and John of Ephesus, who wrote ecclesiastical histories of the period; Paul the Silentiary, who composed a vivid poetic description of Hagia Sophia; and Romanus the Melodistwho is credited with composing 1,000 hymns. John was the author of several texts, including *De Ostentis (On Portents)* and a work on the calendar called *De Mensibus (On Months)*, as well as poems, panegyrics, and a history of Justinian's Persian War, which have not survived. *De Magistratibus* is John's most important surviving work.

Drawing on experience gained from his long career in the civil administration as well as his interest in antiquity and scholarly research, this work, written in Latin, provides a history of the office of the praetorian prefect in the civil administration, from Romulus and the founding of Rome to John's own day; it demonstrates the continuities of Roman institutions and customs over that period. The work includes comments and reflections, often bitter, on contemporary government, with particular animosity toward Praetorian Prefect John the Cappadocian, one of the driving forces behind Justinian's government reforms.

John witnessed Emperor Justinian's *renovatio*, his ideology of renewal, which heralded a restoration of Roman vitality, imperial authority, efficiency in government, and recovery of the empire's lost provinces in the west. As an antiquarian at heart, John lauded Justinian's efforts. He also reconciled the classical notion of Roman freedom under the Roman Republic with the idea that the emperor in his own day was guided by, and subordinate to, Roman law. By respecting the laws and the structures of the state, including entrenched elites, the emperor preserved his legitimacy; he was a father to his people. On the other hand, by overturning inherited laws and structures, he became a tyrant, like Romulus or Diocletian.

John, however, demonstrated a level of unease and uncertainty about Justinian, whose reign, while proclaiming a guiding ideology of *renovatio*, also provided evidence of innovation, upending inherited traditions. One example is the elimination of the position of consul, last held in 541 CE, which had been absorbed into the imperial office. The position of consul had been a direct link to the Roman Republic. John struggled to consider whether the absorption of the position was an example of imperial attempts at preservation and renewal, or a tyrannical break with the past. Some scholars argue that there was no unease at all in John's thought and that he viewed Justinian as a tyrant. The state, which had deteriorated from its glorious past and Roman freedom, was now subject to the whims of the emperor.

The decline of John's own curial order presents another example of change. These were local elite families on whom the Roman Empire had long relied for much

administrative and governmental duties in the provinces. Decurions, members of the curial order, and their city councils (*curiae* in Latin, *boulai* in Greek) governed cities and their surrounding territories, being responsible for tax collection, the upkeep of civic buildings and roads, including the *cursus publicus* (the public post), the provision of games and entertainments, and the general maintenance of peace and order.

In the later Roman Empire, these duties and responsibilities became an increasing financial burden for the curial order, while an attractive alternative emerged: imperial service, and entry into the senatorial and ecclesiastical orders. The latter essentially liberated the curial order of local elites from the provincial burden, even as emperors, from the fourth century to the sixth, struggled to tie former decurions to their provincial obligations. John himself was following this very path. Justinian, in fact, sought to revive the curial order, but to no avail. While John could still recall a time when the cities were still governed by them, the order was less able to continue its traditional duties. In these circumstances, these responsibilities were assumed by bishops and new imperial officials.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of; Master of Offices; *Organization and Administration*: Municipal Administration; Taxes; *Individuals*: Diocletian; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Events*: Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Persia, Wars with

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Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of (sixth century)

A large 10th-century mosaic in Hagia Sophia, the great cathedral of Constantinople, prominently portrays two emperors, Constantine and Justinian. In a sense, these were the two emperors who fundamentally shaped the Byzantine world view. In the 4th century, Constantine created Constantinople, the capital of the *Christian* empire. Then, in the 6th century, Justinian built Hagia Sophia, which stood as the largest church in the Christian world for a millennium—a testament to Byzantine wealth and technological skill.

Hagia Sophia, with its massive scale and magnificent dome, was the engineering masterpiece of Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus, completed only five years after the Nika Revolt, which had destroyed the previous, if less splendid, version in 532 CE. Among the factors behind the revolt were Justinian's reforms, which stirred animosity among the senatorial elite and populace. Some elites used the urban turmoil to advance a rival emperor, with the hope of replacing Justinian, but it was not to be. Justinian violently suppressed the riot, executed the imperial claimant, and punished senators, clearing the path for his new buildings and policies.

Yet, it is Justinian's cathedral that was commemorated, and with it, a reminder that Justinian wanted this work to outshine all challengers. Justinian was said to have boasted at its completion, "Solomon, I have surpassed thee," but he was, at the same time, boasting to elites, who were also patrons of churches, such as the Church of Saint Polyeuktos by his contemporary Anicia Juliana, that no rival could compete with him. Justinian wanted his power and authority unchallenged, which was reflected in the reforms he instituted.

Justinian sought to improve the efficiency of the state bureaucracy by reforming and standardizing law, suppressing corruption, improving tax collection, and eliminating governmental structures that were deemed wasteful or redundant. In addition to the political and economic impact of these reforms, the work was used to project an ideological message that the emperor was the divinely appointed ruler, guiding the state with heavenly support and returning it to its past grandeur.

A tireless leader, Justinian was actively involved in the daily affairs of the empire and sought to guarantee that state institutions and policies would not be subverted for private gain. Justinian forbade the sale of state positions such as provincial governorships, increased the pay of many officials (to undermine corruption), abolished positions deemed unnecessary, including an entire level of provincial administration, and culled the diocese that stood between provincial government and the larger prefecture level and was led by an official known as a vicar. He also combined some smaller provinces, reducing the total number of officials. As a result, he increased the judicial authority of provincial officials to decrease the volume of appeals coming to the capital.

This reform effort required vigilance, clarity of policy, and careful oversight. To help in this arduous task, Justinian selected senior officials for their ability and loyalty, rather than for any elite status. Like him, key figures such as his wife, Theodora; his prefect, John the Cappadocian; Quaestor Tribonian; and Generals Belisarius and Narses were from humble origins. On the other hand, those from the Constantinopolitan elite, who were impacted by increased taxation or loss of revenue, came to resent these imperial activities and the officials who made them possible. The emperor closed tax loopholes, aggrieving some of the senatorial elite, while his prefect, John the Cappadocian, zealously sought to reduce spending where he could, root out tax evaders, and squeeze revenue where possible. These policies were as unpopular as they were valuable, even if the officials were, in fact, particularly unscrupulous. In 532 CE, the crowd at the Nika Revolt called for John's removal, to which Justinian agreed, only to restore him to power less than a year later.

Soon after his accession to the imperial throne, Justinian assembled a commission, led by John the Cappadocian, to review and organize Roman law that had been issued from the time of Emperor Hadrian to Justinian. The commission produced the *Code of Justinian* in 529 CE. A second commission, led by the Quaestor Tribonian, produced an authorized legal commentary, the *Digest*, in 533 CE, along with an authoritative textbook for law students called the *Institutes*. In 534 CE, Tribonian's commission completed a correction and revision of the *Code*. Justinian's legislation continued after this codification and his new laws, called *Novels* (Latin *Novellae,* "new laws"), supplemented the *Code*. The *Code, Digest*, and *Institutes* were issued in Latin, but the *Novels* were in Greek. Taken together, the *Code, Digest, Institutes,* and *Novels* are referred to as the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (*CIC*), an achievement as grand as Hagia Sophia itself. Just as with the fiscal impact of Justinian's reforms and the prominence of Prefect John the Cappadocian as the official driving them, law was also an instrument of power, and the crowd at the Nika Revolt had called for Tribonian's removal from his position as quaestor.

Justinian's wide-ranging reforms sought to make the fiscal system of the empire more efficient, to ensure that military authorities could not abuse civil authority in the provinces, and to enforce policies that kept large landowners from avoiding taxation or acting as a law unto themselves. Also, they were envisioned to make the public post (*cursus publicus*) and judicial system more efficient, to require senators to hear legal appeals, and to establish Byzantine authority in the newly conquered areas in the west, creating a prefecture for Africa in 534 CE and for Italy in 537 CE, where he combined civil and military authority.

Justinian also used his authority to mold a moral and exclusive society according to his vision. He banned brothels from Constantinople and ordered the death penalty for any who engaged in homosexual acts. He also condemned those who did not accept "correct" Christian teaching, thus persecuting pagans, Samaritans, and Manichaeans. Pagans were even banned from teaching, and Justinian closed the Academy at Athens, whose teachers fled to Persia.

Justinian also sought to restore unity in the church, which had been divided over Christology (the study of Christ's divine and human natures) since the Fourth Ecumenical Council in 451 CE. While Rome supported the decisions at Chalcedon, much of the east, particularly in Syria and Egypt, rejected it, preferring an anti-Chalcedonian theology known as Monophysite ("one nature"). This debate was both a theological and political problem, undermining church and imperial unity. Since it was Justinian's imperial responsibility to support and promote "correct" belief, he summoned the Fifth Ecumenical Council, which met at Constantinople in 551 CE, but this effort, as well as others, failed to create unity. Yet, his wife, Theodora, acted in support of the Monophysite cause. It was alleged that this backing was an imperial strategy, to show support of contradictory theologies from the same imperial palace.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: *Cursus Publicus*; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Corruption; Fiscal System; Law; Province; Taxes; *Individuals*: Belisarius;

Justinian; Narses; Theodora; *Key Events*: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*; Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Kletorologion of Philotheos (899 CE)

The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos comprising lists establishing the precedence of late Roman and Byzantine titles and offices, known as *Taktika* in Greek and *notitiae* in Latin, exist from the 4th to the 14th centuries, although most date to the 9th and 10th centuries. The purpose of these *taktika* (from *taxis*, "order") was to provide a list of officeholders and dignitaries to the *atriklines*, the official in the palace charged with organizing imperial banquets. These middle Byzantine *taktika* are some of the most useful sources for identifying the structure of the imperial hierarchy and the officers who could have served in the capital or provinces at a given time.

Kletorologion is the conventional title for the longest of the lists of precedence and signals at the outset the use of these at imperial banquets: "An accurate account of the established order for the imperial banquets and the summoning of each of the ranks and honour accorded to it, compiled by Philotheos, imperial *protospatharios* and *atriklines*." It formed a part of the *Book of Ceremonies*, which was compiled at the order of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 912–959 CE). The title dates it precisely "in the month of September, indiction three, year 6408 from the creation of the world," which would be September 899 CE, during the reign of Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE).

The *Kletorologion* survives in the two extant manuscripts of the *Book of Ceremonies: Cod. Lipsiensis bibl. urb. or univ.* Rep. I, 17, fols. 234–262v (10th century), in Leipzig, and *Cod. Chalcensis S. Trinitatis* (11th century), now in Istanbul. *Cod. Hierosolymitanus S. Sepulchri* (12th/13th centuries), in Jerusalem, contains section 2 and the first part of section 3. The text in the Jerusalem manuscript is a later revision, although one that dates to the same period as the text in the Leipzig and Chalcis manuscripts. As a part of the *Book of Ceremonies*, it was first edited by J. H. Leich and J. H. Reiske and published in Leipzig in 1754, after which it was reprinted, with edits, in Bonn in 1829. Separate editions of the *Kletorologion* were made by J. H. Bury (1911) and Nicolas Oikonomides (1972).

Philotheos imperial *protospatharios* and *atriklines* is otherwise unknown from Byzantine sources. He describes the purpose of the work and his own position in the

introduction: “The knowledge possessed by the *atriklinai* displays its usefulness quite simply in determining the differences between the ranks in their order and composition and accurate placement . . . it is necessary for us, who have been chosen for service, to define in our own mind the authoritative summoning of the ranks . . . and then to explain and set out their divisions and subdivisions and precise composition.”

Part 1 begins with a description of the ceremony in the Chrysotriklinos at which new dignitaries receive the insignia from the emperor. The text distinguishes between honors “by award” (*axia dia brabeion*)—titles, ranks, or dignities, which are held by the dignitary for life—and those “by word” or “nomination” (*axia dia logou*)—offices that are held for a term and pass from person to person.

The *Kletorologion* enumerates 18 dignities, with a further 8 reserved for eunuchs (2 of these appear on both lists: *protospatharios* and *patrikios*). Alongside each title, the author identifies the insignia associated with each dignity—for example, a gold rod for *silentarios* (the second-lowest rank), a gold-and-white metal sword for *spatharios* (the eighth-lowest rank), and a crown without a cross for *kaisar* (the highest rank). Some of the ranks required the payment of gratuities to other officers or dignitaries. Although the text does not mention it, the titles up to *protospatharios* were obtained by paying to the state a sum of money, which was never refunded but provided dignitaries with a small return on investment in the form of an annual salary (*roga*).

In addition, 61 offices were included, with a further 9 reserved for eunuchs. The 61 offices were broken down into 6 or 7 categories: *strategoi* (generals and governors of the military provinces, 26), *domestikoi* (commanders of *tagmata*, or professional regiments, 7), judges (3), bureaucrats (11), *demokratai* (leaders of the circus factions, 2), *stratarchai* (officers dealing with military-related affairs, 5), and special officers (7). The eunuch offices were all related to service at the Great Palace. In addition to this

SYNETHEIA

During their appointment, Byzantine titleholders were expected to give out gifts to a wide range of individuals from the staff of the imperial palace to members of the clergy. This practice was known as *synetheia* and often required considerable expenditure on the part of the giver. For example, a *protospatharios* was expected to gift 24 *nomismata* to both the eunuch and noneunuch *protospatharioi*, 18 to the imperial *katepano*, 6 to the imperial *domestikos*, and another 12 to the *papias* and his assistant. The newly created *protospatharios* thus had to distribute a sum that exceeded the yearly *roga* for his rank. Gifts from recipients of a high-ranking titleholder could be much larger and might also include invitations to feasts and valuable clothes. *Synetheia* gifts must have been a significant source of income for the staff of the imperial palace and a useful means for the emperors to reward their servants without dipping into their own coffers.

Jonathan Shea

survey of the top level of the military, fiscal, judicial, and palatine administrations, this section lists the subordinate officers in each department.

Parts 2 and 3, which detail the order in which dignitaries are seated at imperial banquets, are most like other 9th- and 10th-century *taktika*. Part 2 focuses on two groups: the 6 who dine with the emperor—the patriarch of Constantinople and 5 whose titles or offices were given to members of the imperial family—and dignitaries down to the rank of *patrikios*, that is, the third-highest rank for members not of the imperial family during this period. The text further distinguishes between dignitaries with and without offices: those with offices are given rank over simple dignitaries, despite any other system of precedence, for example, according to how long an individual held a specific rank. Part 3 elaborates the system introduced in part 2 by introducing four orders, from highest to lowest. It ends with the relative ranking of ambassadors from foreign nations, including Rome, the eastern patriarchates, Arabs, Bulgarians, and Franks.

In the final section, the author details the feasts held in various rooms in the Great Palace and who should be in attendance to them. It begins with Christmas Day and proceeds through the Twelve Days of Christmas (up to the feast of the Epiphany, and not including Epiphany Eve). Additional feasts include major Christian holidays—for example, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension Day, Transfiguration, and the Dormition of the Virgin—while others are related to Constantinople and the imperial family, like the anniversary of the city, the consecration of the Nea Ekklesia (built by Emperor Basil I, the father of Leo VI), the commemoration of Basil I, and the accession of Leo VI and Alexander. Banquets were occasionally accompanied by festivals and chariot races in the nearby Hippodrome, or by dances. Although most feasts took place in the Hall of Nineteen Couches, others were held in the Hall of Justinian, the Hall of the Kathisma, and the Hall of the Okeanos.

A discussion follows of the distribution of the emperor's largesse at the ancient feast of the Broumalia and at the anniversaries of accessions and coronations, with instructions on how to calculate how much should be given to each office. These were payments made by the state to office and titleholders in addition to their salaries. The *Kletorologion* closes with a note on the customary gifts due to the *atriklines* (the author of the text) upon the appointment of new dignitaries.

In addition to information about the administrative structure at court, the *Kletorologion* is an important document for its detailing of court costumes, both those worn at various ceremonies and feasts as well as those pertaining to different ranks. The text also provides evidence for social relations at court: the poor and foreign dignitaries were specifically invited for some feast days. Finally, the *Kletorologion*, though developed for a particular use, is emblematic of the social organization of the Byzantine Empire, especially during the 9th and 10th centuries. Status was determined by one's place within an administrative hierarchy that rewarded service and investment in the system, as opposed to blood relationship with the emperor, as predominated from the end of the 11th century. However, service and acceptance into the ranks of the hierarchy were ultimately at the will of the emperor.

Lain Wilson

See also: *Government and Politics*: *Patrikios; Taktikon Uspensky*; *Organization and Administration*: Dignities; Hierarchy; Judge, Justice; Offices; *Groups and Organizations*: Eunuchs; Franks; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople

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Koubikoularios

The Greek *koubikoularios* derives from the Latin *cubicularius*, chamberlain, a term linked to the residence of the emperor, the *sacrum cubiculum*, literally the Sacred Bedchamber. In the late Roman period, *koubikoularioi* served under the *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, the grand chamberlain. The *koubikoularioi* were eunuchs who made up the staff of the imperial palace in Constantinople and could fulfill many roles beyond that of simple *koubikoularios*, such as the official in charge of the sacred bedchamber, *primicerius sacri cubiculi*, and the steward of the sacred palace, *castransis sacri palatii*. Large numbers of eunuchs serving as *cubicularii* were first recorded in the fourth century. Eunuchs serving in the palace could become very powerful, with wide-reaching administrative responsibilities that extended far beyond the imperial residence, such as Eutropius, the grand chamberlain under Arcadius (r. 395–408 CE). Because of the limits placed on their personal ambition by their physical condition, eunuchs became the preferred servants at the Byzantine court and became a fixed feature of the Byzantine system by the fifth century. Alongside their palatine roles, early *koubikoularioi* performed many other functions. Antiochus served as the tutor to the future Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE), and later Chrysaphius became an important political figure who was involved in a plot to assassinate Attila the Hun. Because of their lack of

dynastic ambitions and interactions with the emperor, *koubikoularioi* were often trusted with important tasks far outside their usual sphere of influence. Under Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE), the *cubicularius* Narses helped to quell the Nika Revolt and was later trusted with command in Justinian's Gothic War in Italy, where he won victories against the Goths at Taginae (552 CE) and Mons Lactarius (552 or 553 CE) and the Franks at Casilinum (554 CE).

From the 7th century until the 11th century, eunuchs continued to be an important part of the imperial system. Individuals such as Samonas under Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE), Basil Lecapenus under Constantine VII (r. 913–959 CE), Nicephorus II (r. 963–969 CE), John I (r. 969–976 CE) and Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE), and Nicephorus Ouranos under Basil II exercised power both in the palace and beyond, and the latter two continued the tradition of the eunuch generals begun by Narses. The *kouboukleion*, the eunuch household of the emperor under the *praipositoi*, was frequently referred to as a group in the 10th-century treatise on imperial ceremony, *De Ceremonis*, produced by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos. In this work, the *kouboukleion* was described taking part in a great variety of ceremonials, from events in the Great Palace and imperial processions, to the reception of dignitaries and the procedures around the creation of state officials and titleholders. Members of the *kouboukleion* were often involved in acclamations, escorting high-ranking individuals, or lining processional routes, and thus formed a sort of backdrop against which imperial ceremonies were played out. This role, however, does not mean that they were without power and influence. As the only group, apart from the imperial family, to live in the palace alongside the emperor, members of the *kouboukleion* had a unique opportunity to interact with, influence, and receive the favor of the emperor.

In the middle Byzantine period, the term *koubikoularios*, referencing an individual, transformed from a more general term for palace eunuchs into one of many titles reserved specifically for them, although still associated with a position in the imperial household. In two of the lists of precedence that record the Byzantine hierarchy of the period, the *Taktikon Uspensky* and the *Kletorologion of Philotheos, koubikoularios* occupied the sixth place out of seven and the seventh out of eight in the eunuch hierarchy, respectively. There was an official ceremony for the appointment of a *koubikoularios* that took place in the Hall of the Chrysotriklinos, the throne room, and the chapel of Saint Theodore the Great Martyr. The new *koubikoularios* swore to be subject only to one noneunuch, the emperor, and to be humble and sober, to avoid conspiring with rebels, and never to breach the veil of privacy around the emperor. At this point he took a golden cloak, the symbol of his new position, from the doors of the church, entered the throne room, and bowed to the emperor.

Official dress was important in Byzantium, allowing participants in court life to immediately identify the ranks of those around them. Philotheos recorded the official costume of a *koubikoularios* as a *kamision* (a simple tunic worn by those of low rank) bordered with silk and a golden *paragaudion* (a cloak). He also mentioned the then new title *spatharokoubikoularios*, a combination of the word for sword with *koubikoularios*, which denoted a chamberlain armed with a golden-handled sword. Although

primarily eunuchs, there were rare mentions of female *koubikoularaia* serving the empress. The ceremony for the creation of a female *koubikoularaia* was like that recorded for a man, except that at the end she visited the empress to give thanks for her new position rather than the emperor. The official garb of a *koubikoularaia* was a golden *paragaudion*, a *propoloma* (a headdress), a white veil, and a white *charazanion* (possibly a headband).

The supposedly trustworthy nature of eunuchs meant that *koubikoularioi* in the middle Byzantine period continued to occupy many posts both inside and outside the palace. Sigillographic evidence (seals) records *koubikoularioi* who held important palatine positions such as *parakoimomenos* (successor to the Late Antique Grand Chamberlain's position as paramount domestic servant) and *epi tes trapezes* (the eunuch in charge of the emperor's table), as well as posts in the imperial administration, such as *sakellarios* (chief of a financial bureau) and *chartoularios* (a clerical position). Eunuchs even held military commands, including that of *domestikos* of the *scholae* (commander of the Byzantine army), from which they were technically banned, particularly under the rule of Constantine VIII (r. 1025–1028) and his daughter Theodora (r. 1055–1056). Although eunuchs continued to serve the emperor in a variety of posts, the title of *koubikoularios* was not mentioned in the surviving sources after the first half of the 11th century.

Jonathan Shea

See also: *Government and Politics*: *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; *Taktikon Uspensky*; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Dignities; Hierarchy; Offices; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; Narses; Theodosius II; *Groups and Organizations*: Eunuchs; *Key Events*: Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople

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Kouropalates

Kouropalates was a Byzantine court title deriving from the late Roman palatine office of *cura palatii*, the official in charge of the palace buildings and maintaining

order in the palace. *Cura palatii/kouropalates* was one of many examples from Byzantine history of an office losing its function due to the slow evolution of the imperial system and transforming into a dignity. Once the transition was completed, the title of *kouropalates* was most commonly bestowed on members of the imperial family, a practice that was followed from the 6th to the 11th century. Notable holders include the future emperor Justin II (r. 565–574 CE); Artavasdos (r. 741–743 CE), the son-in-law of Leo III (r. 717–741 CE); and Leo Phocas, who received the title from his brother Nicephorus II (r. 963–969 CE) in 963 CE. In the 9th- and 10th-century *taktika*, the lists of precedence that record the Byzantine court system, *kouropalates* occupied the third position in the hierarchy behind Caesar and *nobelissimos*.

The complex ceremony accompanying the creation of a new *kouropalates* was recorded in the 10th century by Constantine VII (r. 913–959 CE) in his work *De Ceremonis*. At his investiture ceremony, the future *kouropalates* was accompanied into the imperial presence by the *patrikioi*, where he performed obeisance to the emperor. At this point he was presented with the official garb of his dignity—a purple *divitsion* (a ceremonial tunic made from silk and reserved for only the most important individuals), which the emperor personally fastened around his shoulders with a gold *fibula*—the Senate gave thanks, and the *kouropalates* traveled from the Chytos of the Chalke (the gate of the Great Palace) to the Blachernae Church, at the opposite end of the city, where he lit candles. After the patriarch had said a prayer and performed the communion, the *kouropalates* returned home. Philotheos, writing at the end of the 9th century, recorded a different official dress for the *kouropalates*, a red-and-gold *chiton* (tunic) with a *chlamys* (a long cloak fastened over the right shoulder with a fibula) and a belt. Investiture ceremonies were not just a way to display the individual being honored. They also served to distribute wealth to the court. As a part of the ceremony where the dignity of *kouropalates* was granted, the recipient was expected to give gifts totaling 3,720 *nomismata* to the staff of the imperial palace and the church of Hagia Sophia. Set against this practice, the holder could expect an annual stipend from the emperor of 2,304 *nomismata*.

Not all *kouropalatai* in the middle Byzantine period were members of the imperial family. The title also played an important role in Byzantine diplomatic relations with the Christian kingdoms in the Caucasus during the 10th and 11th centuries. *De Administrando Imperio* and *De Ceremonis* record that members of the Bagratid family, who ruled Iberia, Kartli, Tao, and later Georgia, were honored with the dignity of *kouropalates* by the emperors of the 9th to 11th centuries, starting with Ashot I (r. ca. 813–830 CE). A number of these rulers chose to use this dignity on their coins, a sign of how valuable both the title itself and the connection that it implied to the Byzantine court were to these men.

After the early 11th century, the title of *kouropalates* steadily declined in importance. As the process of title inflation, which can be observed across the 11th century, gained pace, one of the ways that the emperors tried to mitigate its effects was to open those titles previously reserved for the imperial family to outsiders. *Kouropalates* became a popular title to grant to generals from ca. 1050. Men such as Katakalon Kekaumenos and the future emperors Isaac I Comnenus (r. 1057–1059) and Alexius I

Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) were awarded the dignity as a reward for their military service. There is also evidence from late 11th-century seals of theme judges, high-ranking civilian provincial administrators, who held the title. In 1074 when the emperor Michael VII (r. 1071–1078) issued a *chrysobull* (imperial document with an attached golden seal) to the Norman ruler of southern Italy, Duke Robert Guiscard, *kouropalates* still ranked behind *nobelissimos*. It was assigned a stipend of 32 pounds of gold coins, or 2,304 *nomismata*, but its days near the peak of the hierarchy were numbered. With the creation of a new system of honors by Alexius I in the 1080s and 1090s, both the position of *kouropalates* in the court hierarchy and its exclusivity continued to wane. The historian John Skylitzes held this rank at the time while serving as the *droungarios* of the *Vigla*, once a military command but by this point a high judicial office, and the higher-ranking military and civilian officials were now *nobelissimoi*.

In the later 11th century, by 1082 at the latest, the dignity of *protokouropalates* appeared, itself an indication of the devaluation of the original title. However, in spite of their decline, Alexius I chose to keep the titles of *protokouropalates* and *kouropalates* for his new hierarchy. They continued in a debased form, occupying the 9th and 10th positions in the hierarchy, respectively. As new titles were invented in the 12th and 13th centuries based around the dignity of *sebastos*, the position of *kouropalates* in the hierarchy continued to slip. The author of the 14th-century list of ranks, known as Pseudo-Kodinos, held the title of *kouropalates* but recounted that it was a rarely given honor in his time. His official attire consisted of a *skiadon* (a type of hat) decorated with gold, a caftan, and an apricot-colored *skaranikon* (either a type of tunic or a hat) decorated with two images of the emperor—one standing, one enthroned—engraved on glass. Pseudo-Kodinos placed the honor in the 15th position in the court hierarchy.

Jonathan Shea

See also: *Government and Politics*: *De Administrando Imperio* (Constantine VII); Diplomacy; *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; *Nobilissimos; Sebastos/Sebaste; Tatikon Uspensky; Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Dignities; Hierarchy; Offices; *Individuals*: Comnena, Anna; Comnenus, Alexius I; Justinian; Leo III, the Isaurian; Liudprand of Cremona; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Magistros

The title of *magistros* originated in the office of *magister officiorum*, master of offices, the chief civil official of the central bureaucracy in the late Roman Empire. As happened with many offices, that of *magister officiorum* gradually transformed during the turbulent 7th and 8th centuries, losing most of its administrative function and becoming an imperial counselor. By the 9th century at the latest, *magister officiorum* had become simply *magistros*, a dignity with purely ceremonial responsibilities. In the 9th- and 10th-century *taktika*, lists of precedence that record the Byzantine hierarchy, *magistros* was the highest male title conferred on men who were not imperial relations. It occupied the fifth place in the overall hierarchy. As with all Byzantine titleholders, *magistroi* were expected to play an important role in court ceremonies. Their high status meant that the *magistroi* were the first group to perform obeisance to the emperor following his coronation.

The 10th-century handbook *De Ceremonis* recorded two possible ceremonies for the creation of a *magistros*. The first, alternately dated to the 8th or 9th centuries, took place during a procession from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia. The second took place in the Great Palace and would thus have been a more private affair. In both ceremonies, the newly appointed *magistros* received a *sticharion* (a sleeved long tunic), over which he wore his own *chlamys* (a long cloak fastened over the right shoulder with a fibula), and a belt from the hands of the emperor himself.

Philotheos, author of one of the *taktika* written in 899 CE, recorded a slightly different ceremonial costume for the *magistros*, namely a white-and-gold *chiton* (tunic) with a gold *tablion* (a decorative embroidered panel) and a red leather belt set with jewels. As part of the ceremony, the newly created *magistros* was expected to give gifts to the staff of the imperial palace that totaled 1,824 *nomismata*. When Liudprand of Cremona visited Constantinople on a diplomatic mission to the court of Constantine VII in 950 CE, he witnessed the ceremony during which the emperor distributed the *roga*, the salaries, of his officials. He recorded that the *magistroi* were paid 24 pounds of gold, or 1,728 *nomismata*, and two *skaramangia* (a long-sleeved belted tunic). Liudprand also recorded, on a later mission to the court of Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963–969 CE), that there were 24 *magistroi*—a doubling of the number recorded half a century earlier.

The importance of the title of *magistros* in the middle Byzantine period was indicated by the individuals to whom it was granted and the services that they performed for the emperor. Symeon the Logothete and Saint Symeon Metaphrastes, high-ranking bureaucrats, both held this title in the 10th century, as did the future emperor Romanus Lecapenus when he held the position of *megas hetaireaiarches*. John Tzimiskes was raised to the rank of *magistros* by his uncle Nicephorus II Phocas in 963 CE, while at the same time he received his promotion as *domestikos* of the *scholae* of the east, effectively the senior command in the Byzantine army. Similarly, it was with the rank of *magistros* that Nicephorus Ouranos would govern much of Byzantium's

Asian territories from Antioch after 999 as "ruler of the east" under Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE).

The Byzantines often granted titles to the rulers of neighboring lands as a means of forging a link between that person and the imperial court. In the 10th century, many of the rulers of the Bagratid Dynasty, a family of Armenian princes ruling a collection of territories in the Caucasus and eastern Anatolia, were granted the title of *magistros* as part of Byzantine diplomatic moves to secure their northeastern frontier. The title was also given to Boris II of Bulgaria, but in the form of compensation after John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976 CE) dethroned him in 971 CE, dissolving the Bulgarian Empire.

As with most of the titles in the Byzantine hierarchy, *magistros* suffered from the process of title inflation that gradually undermined the imperial system in the 11th century. Once the title of *proedros* and its derivatives were introduced, beginning in ca. 1042, *magistros* no longer occupied the top position in the hierarchy. The decline of the dignity continued once the titles of *nobelissimos* and *kouropalates* ceased to be reserved solely for members of the imperial family from the 1050s. However, *magistros* continued to be held by many very important individuals, among them many Dukes of Antioch, high-ranking members of the Byzantine provincial administration, and military on the eastern frontier, such as Romanus Skleros, duke before his promotion to *proedros* in June or July 1054. In a *chrysobull*, an imperial document secured with a golden seal, issued in 1074 for Duke Robert Guiscard, the Norman ruler of southern Italy, the position of *magistros* had dropped at least one place in the hierarchy, due to the introduction of the dignity of *proedros*, with the resulting decrease in salary associated with the title, to 16 pounds of gold coins, or 1,152 *nomismata*.

It has been suggested that by the early years of the reign of Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118), the title of *magistros* had become the crossover point between the lower and higher honors within the Byzantine court system, a significant decline for a dignity that had marked the pinnacle of a nonimperial career only half a century earlier. The female form, *magistrissa*, is recorded in many 11th-century seals and denoted the wife of a *magistros*, not a separate female title. *Magistroi* continued to exist into the early 12th century, but the title did not seem to have formed an important part of the new hierarchy created by Alexius I, which largely comprised titles based on modified forms of the imperial dignity of *sebastos*. The last appearance of the title in use in the written sources was to the son of a *magistros* dated to 1125, although Pseudo-Kodinos recorded it among a list of obsolete titles in the 14th century, demonstrating that memory of the dignity, if not the title itself, survived until his time.

Jonathan Shea

See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Kletorologion* of Philetheos; Master of Offices; *Proedros; Sebastos/Sebaste; Taktikon Uspensky*; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Dignities; Hierarchy; Offices; *Individuals*: Comnena, Anna; Comnenus, Alexius I; Lecapenus, Romanus I; Liudprand of Cremona; *Military*: *Hetairoi*; *Scholae Palatinae; Tagmata; Key Places*: Antioch; Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Master of Offices

The master of offices (*magister officiorum*) was the one of the highest and most powerful political positions in the civil administration of the early Byzantine Empire. The office was likely created by Emperor Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE), though some have attributed it to Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE). The purpose of the office was to serve as the leading figure in the civil administration and to preside over the imperial government's central administration.

The position had many, and quite varied, responsibilities. The master of offices controlled the *cursus publicus*, which was the imperial communication and transportation network, and directed a company of imperial messengers and inspectors known as *agentes in rebus*. In addition and related to the master of offices' authority over the imperial post, diplomatic negotiations became the responsibility of this office. The master of offices sometimes traveled abroad, and foreign ambassadors moving from frontier through the empire and on to the imperial capital were in his power and careful oversight. To manage the diplomatic needs of the empire, which involved working with myriad peoples and diverse languages, the master of offices had a corps of interpreters at his disposal.

In the capital, the master of offices was responsible for the protection of the emperor and directed an imperial guard unit called the *Scholae Palatinae*, which had several thousand troops. The master of offices supervised the imperial palace itself and managed the court schedule, regulating access to the emperor's ear. This supervision included control over the palace administration and imperial stables.

Beyond the capital, the master of offices sought to ensure imperial safety by rooting out disloyal officials and uncovering possible conspiracies against the emperor. Equipped with the management of the *cursus publicus* and his *agentes in rebus*, the master of offices became the head of the empire's "secret police," scrutinizing activity in the provinces that could potentially undermine imperial authority and, by doing so, encouraging obedience.

While the master of offices did lead an imperial guard unit in the capital, he had little influence over military affairs. His authority expanded to include oversight of

the frontier forces known as *limitanei*, who guarded the empire's border areas (*limes* in Latin). Yet, *limitanei* were not mobile troops and by the sixth century were essentially farmers who inherited the responsibility of defending their local frontiers. They were not considered particularly effective military forces. Apart from his command of these troops, the master of offices did not exercise any military power, control of which was primarily held by the master of soldiers (*magister militum*), who commanded the bulk of the empire's military forces, and by commanders of other specialized military units (*comes domesticorum, comes excubitorum*). The master of offices did manage the empire's armament factories, which supplied the military forces, and, along with the *quaestor* of the Sacred Palace (the empire's senior judicial official), served as the highest judge of appeal for military courts.

Given his vast powers, it is important to note the limits of his authority in the civil administration. The master of offices did not have command over the empire's finances, which were managed by the Count of the Sacred Largess (*comes sacrarum largitionum*) and the Count of the Private Purse (*comes rei privatae*). Hs judicial authority was far less than that of the *quaestor of the Sacred Palace,* the highest judicial official of the civil administration. Moreover, he did not oversee provincial administration, which was the responsibility of the praetorian prefect. Considering the powers of these high offices in the Byzantine civil administration, and the tensions of their limitations, rivalry and bitter intrigue at times came to the fore.

The longest-serving master of offices in Byzantine history was Peter the Patrician, who held the office from 539–565 CE, during the reign of Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE). This period was an extremely active one for diplomatic activity. Even before he started his tenure in office, the emperor sent Peter to Italy as an ambassador, where he received rather rude treatment from the Ostrogothic government. Peter publicly expressed Byzantine support for Queen Amalasuntha, who had been regent for her son from 526–534 CE and then ruler in 535 CE. The queen was assassinated by her husband, Theodahad (r. 534–536 CE). It was alleged by the sixth-century Byzantine historian Procopius that Peter encouraged the Gothic leader to murder Amalasuntha to provide Justinian the justification for war and for launching his restoration of Sicily and Italy to the Roman Empire. Justinian rewarded Peter for his talents by appointing him master of offices, a position which he was to hold for the next 26 years. At the end of his tenure, Peter traveled eastward and in 561 CE negotiated the Fifty-Year Peace with the Persian government of Shah Khusro I (r. 531–579 CE). Peter's expertise and knowledge inspired him to write a work on matters related to his office, including on imperial ceremonies and the proper treatment of ambassadors, though only excerpts survive today.

The 7th century marked the end of the early Byzantine period (4th–6th centuries CE) and its transition into the middle period (7th–12th centuries CE). The cataclysmic, even if victorious, Persian War (602–629 CE), followed by the shock of the Arab invasions, which deprived Byzantium of the wealthy provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa, with Anatolia (roughly modern Turkey) barely remaining, while the Balkans were overrun by Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs, reduced and impoverished the empire. The extensive and expensive imperial bureaus and offices of the early Byzantine Empire were wiped away and a new, more streamlined governmental

structure emerged. As a result, the master of offices, with its complex array of duties and subordinates, was eliminated. In its place, a position called *logothetes tou dromou* emerged to manage the duties of communication, control of foreign diplomats, and internal security. The master of offices, while no longer a political position, lived on not as an office but as a rank (*magistros* in Greek), one of the highest that could be bestowed by the emperor.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: *Agentes in Rebus; Cursus Publicus*; Diplomacy; *Magistros; Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Judge, Justice; Province; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; Justinian; Procopius; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Bulgars; Slavs; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with; *Military: Comitatenses;* Excubitors; *Limitanei; Scholae Palatinae*

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Nobelissimos

The title *nobelissimos* was introduced by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) for members of the imperial family. As evidenced by the inscriptions on the coins of his son Crispus, and later those of Julian the Apostate, among others, *nobelissimos* was initially an epithet to the title of Caesar, which gradually evolved into a standalone title. Important members of the imperial family were the usual recipients of the dignity; Justinian I held the title during the reign of his uncle Justin I, as did both the younger son of Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), Martin, and Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), Niketas. Thus, *nobelissimos* had separated from, and become a lower rank than, that of Caesar.

In the middle Byzantine period, the investiture of a *nobelissimos* took place outside the Hall of the Nineteen Couches in the imperial palace, with the emperor himself giving the recipient his insignia. The ceremony involved the patriarch reciting a prayer, then, along with the emperor, Caesar, and the future *nobelissimos*, lighting candles, before the emperor himself placed the sign of the *nobelissimos*'s dignity. This sign was a green chlamys (a long cloak usually fastened at the right shoulder with a fibula) decorated with gold roses and a gold tablion (a decorated embroidered panel), on the recipient. For his later acclamation by the *demes*, the *nobelissimos* wore a scarlet *chalmys*. Philotheos recorded a different garb for the *nobelissimos*, a purple-and-gold *chiton* (tunic) and *chlamys* with a belt. As a part of the ceremony where the dignity of *nobelissimos* was granted, the recipient was expected to give gifts totaling 3,720 *nomismata* to the staff of the imperial palace and the church of Hagia Sophia. In all the 9th- and 10th-century *taktika*, lists of precedence that record the Byzantine hierarchy at the time, the dignity of *nobelissimos* occupied the second place in the hierarchy after Caesar.

It is sometimes stated that the first violation of the rule that *nobelissimoi* had to have been members of the imperial family occurred in 1042, when Michael V (r. 1041–1042) granted the title to the eunuch Constantine. However, as Constantine was Michael's uncle, it could be argued that no such violation took place. A definite break with tradition occurred when Nicephorus III Botaneiates (r. 1078–1081) raised the general and future emperor Alexius Comnenus to the rank of *nobelissimos* in 1078. That Nicephorus III did so was undoubtedly a mark of the special favor that the emperor repeatedly showed to Alexius Comnenus, which included his later elevation to the title of *sebastos*. Alexius was one of Nicephorus III's most accomplished generals and a member of a well-connected family. However, Alexius the *nobelissimos* marked another step in the title inflation that plagued the 11th century, with a title reserved to the imperial family going to an imperial employee instead.

The rules of eligibility for titles were different for foreigners, and in the late 11th century the title of *nobelissimos* was granted to the rulers of many neighboring states. This gesture by the emperor was intended either as a mark of favor or an attempt to win foreign rulers over by diplomatic means. In 1072, upon his accession to the throne, George II (r. 1072–1089) of Georgia was given the title of *nobelissimos*. George could have been a useful ally against the advancing Seljuk Turks. The Norman Duke Robert Guiscard (1059–1085) was granted the title of *nobelissimos* in 1074 as part of Emperor Michael VII Doukas's attempt to stem the tide of Norman conquests, which had seen the province of Byzantine Italy fall in 1071 and now threatened the Empire's Balkan territories. Later the Seljuk Turkish general Tzachas, ruler of an aggressive state around Smyrna, was given the rank of *protonobelissimos* by Nicephorus III Botaneiates.

From the late 11th century onward, emperors, particularly Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118), continued in the tradition of Nicephorus III Botaneiates and granted the honorific of *nobelissimos* much more liberally than had been the case in previous centuries. Thus, the standing of *nobelissimos* in the hierarchy declined and the title *protonobelissimos* developed as a new, higher honorific. Even this elevated dignity declined rapidly in importance, and by the end of the 11th century, *protonobelissimos* had become only the highest title granted to individuals not of the imperial family, a position once occupied by the dignity of *magistros*.

The title of *nobelissimos* survived the reforms of Alexius I Comnenus in the 1080s and 1090s, in which he created a new host of titles based upon the imperial epithet of *sebastos*. *Protonobelissimos* and *nobelissimos* occupied the seventh and eighth places in the hierarchy, respectively. They were outside of the new hierarchy marking the Comnenian elite. Instead, *nobelissimos* and *protonobelissimos* were senatorial ranks, frequently given to dukes (military governors) and provincial judges (civilian administrators) in the late 11th and 12th centuries, as evidenced by many lead seals. In the 12th century, new elaborations of the title appeared, such as *protonobelissimohypertatos*, a sign that even after the reforms of Alexius I Comnenus title inflation continued. The last written source to mention the dignity of *nobelissimos* is from the monastery of the Lavra on Mount Athos, dated to 1196.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; *Sebastos/ Sebaste; Taktikon Uspensky; Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Dignities; Hierarchy; *Individuals*: Comnena, Anna; Comnenus, Alexius I; Constantine the Great; Julian the Apostate; *Groups and Organizations*: Demes; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Mount Athos (Greece)

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Notarius

In a 13th-century Gospel manuscript found at Mount Athos was an image of the aristocrat who was the book's patron presenting the book as a gift to Jesus, seated like an emperor on his throne, while Saint John Chrysostom (a bishop of Constantinople) recorded Christ's responses to the petitioner. Saint John was depicted as a heavenly *notarius*, just as his earthly counterparts were officials who performed secretarial duties in civil, military, and ecclesiastical administrative offices of the Byzantine Empire. The *notarius* kept records and managed documents. The post was extremely important, if unheralded, for the administrative departments of state and the management of the empire. Emperor Maurice, for example, started his military career as the *notarius* of the imperial bodyguard unit of the *Excubitors.* From that position, he became the commander of the *Excubitors* in 574 CE and then emperor in 582 CE.

In the early Byzantine Empire, Constantine organized the *notarii* (plural of Latin term *notarius*) into its own unit, under the command of a *primicerius*, who reported to the *magister officiorium* (master of offices), overseer of the civil service. The *primicerius* managed the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which was a record of all the civil and military officeholders in the imperial government. The existing *Notitia Dignitatum* dates from the early 5th century, but other such lists are extant from the 9th and 10th centuries. The *notarii* enhanced imperial control by tracking and managing information and by reporting news back to the imperial center. *Notarii* also carried petitions to the emperor and imperial messages to judges.

These functions in the middle Byzantine period were handled by officials who became known as *asekretis*, and the *primicerius* morphed into the *protoasekretis*, the director of the imperial records. One *protoasekretis* (Artemios) became emperor, taking the imperial name of Anastasios II (r. 713–715 CE), without achieving his namesake's success, and two went on to become successful patriarchs, Tarasius from 784 to 806 CE and Photius from 858 to 867 CE, and again from 877 to 886 CE. The *protoasekretis* also had subordinate secretaries, the *notarioi* (Greek form of the Latin term *notarii*), over whom he appointed a *protonotarios* as supervisor.

Notarioi and *protonotarioi* served in every theme in the middle Byzantine period as attested through extant lead seals, which they used for certifying their documents. The *protonotarios* played an important role in *thematic* government, ensuring fiscal connections between the central government and the provinces and the provision of thematic troops, until the *thematic* system collapsed. The *notarioi* continued to provide secretarial support for imperial and ecclesiastical administrative offices thereafter.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Agentes in Rebus*; Master of Offices; Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Judge, Justice; *Individuals*: Chrysostom, John; Constantine the Great; Maurice; *Military:* Excubitors; *Notitia Dignitatum*; Themes

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Patriarchs

In early Christianity, a bishop was the overseer (*episokopos* in Greek) of a congregation, serving along with priests (*presbyteroi*) and deacons (*diakonoi*). By the turn of the first century, the monarchical episcopacy had begun to emerge in the Christian world, in which the bishop became the supreme authority over the Christian community in a city and its surrounding territory. This development can be seen in the letters of Bishop Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 35–108 CE), in which he wrote to various Christian communities while on his journey to Rome, where he was to face trial and, ultimately, be executed. This emergent leadership was further bolstered by the idea of "apostolic succession," championed by Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 130–202 CE), who explained that

the episcopal office and its powers had been passed down by the apostles themselves, who had learned the faith directly from Jesus himself, with bishops representing the apostles' authority and correct religious understanding. Thus, by the second century, bishops had become the primary leaders, defenders, and teachers of the Christian community. They dispensed charity, presided over religious rituals, and led the effort to define and implement correct doctrine and practice.

The bishops of cities, which were also the capital of a Roman province, achieved greater influence and began to assume responsibility and overnight over other bishops in the province. These leaders became known as metropolitan bishops and were elected by a gathering of provincial bishops called a synod. The bishops of the empire's wealthiest and most influential cities exercised even wider influence. The most important of these cities were the imperial capitals of Rome and Constantinople, along with Alexandria, the premier city of Egypt, which, until the advent of Constantinople in the fourth century, had been the grandest city of the eastern Mediterranean, and Antioch, the dominant urban center of Syria. One city that held little significance for Roman administration, but was of great importance for Christian history, was Jerusalem, whose bishop, though less affluent and prominent than the others listed, exercised authority over the church of Palestine. These five bishops, presiding over the sees (or bishoprics) of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, and exerting even more expansive authority than metropolitan bishops, became known as patriarchs.

Prior to the fourth century, attempts to resolve disputes over Christian theology and practice had been addressed locally through synods and through communication between bishops, but with limited means of enforcement. After Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) and the Christianization of the Roman Empire, however, resolution was wrought through meetings of bishops representing the entire Christian world, which were known as ecumenical (meaning "universal") councils, whose pronouncements were backed by imperial support. Constantine established the precedent of summoning such a council, calling the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 CE.

The guidance of these five patriarchs, known collectively as the Pentarchy, manifested its power through these ecumenical councils that decreed orthodox doctrine and practice for Christianity. While the authority of the great patriarchates reigned supreme, the ranking of the patriarchs was extremely contested. The Second Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople in 381 CE, declared that the bishop of Constantinople was second only to the bishop of Rome, which the see of Alexandria resented. For decades thereafter, the patriarch of Alexandria sought to assert his authority over Constantinople and led efforts to depose multiple patriarchs of Constantinople, including John Chrysostom in 403–404 CE and Nestorius in 431 CE. The rivalry between eastern patriarchs flared after the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451 CE, with the patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria disagreeing over Christology (the theological explanation of the natures of Jesus) and much of Syria also joining Alexandria, but this tension diminished after the seventh century, when the regions in which these bishops presided had been absorbed into the Muslim caliphate.

Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria from 412 to 444 CE, was one of the greatest of the church fathers, a prolific writer, and a leading supporter of Nicene Christianity. A central figure at the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE, he condemned the teachings of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who denied that Mary was *Theotokos* ("God-bearer"), thereby seeming to Cyril to deny the full divinity of Christ. (Pictures from History/Bridgeman Images)

The rivalry between Rome and Constantinople remained particularly vehement, especially after the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which declared that Constantinople, as the "New Rome," was equal to Rome. In the sixth century, the bishop of Constantinople began using the title "ecumenical patriarchate," again drawing Rome's dismay. In the perspective of the Orthodox Church, Rome was recognized as having the highest place of honor among patriarchs but possessing no more authority or power than any other. The patriarch of Constantinople was held to be equal in authority, but the order of honor was as follows: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

The rivalry between the patriarchates of Rome and Constantinople would continue throughout the Middle Ages. There were disagreements over jurisdiction, both claiming the Balkans (and the recently converted Bulgar and Slavic peoples there), over church practice and theology, and over conflicting ideas about the Pentarchy and papal authority. Such differences came into focus in the ninth century, when Pope Nicholas I (r. 858–867 CE) asserted the supremacy of the bishop of Rome throughout the church, which Photius, patriarch of Constantinople (r. 858–867 CE, 877–886 CE), rejected. Photius wrote a treatise condemning western practices that differed from eastern norms, but the situation was diffused, though not resolved, shortly thereafter. This conflict between Rome and Constantinople ultimately devolved into the Schism of 1054, when mutual excommunications effectively created two separate churches: Catholic in the west and Orthodox in the east. Up until that time, despite tensions and relatively short-term separations, the two were bound together as one ecclesiastical community.

Because of their great influence, patriarchs who presided over territory within the Byzantine Empire were selected by the emperor. When the Byzantine hold on Rome

slipped away in the early Middle Ages, the emperor's ability to influence papal elections diminished and was largely eliminated by the end of the seventh century. To assist in their selection, emperors received recommendations from synods (gatherings of metropolitan and other bishops) but could also impose their own candidate entirely, including members of their own family or officials in the civil administration, even if they had not previously been monks or clergy. What mattered to the palace was loyalty to imperial political and religious policies, which provided an explanation for why approximately one-third of Constantinopolitan patriarchs were forced out or resigned.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Chrysostom, John; Constantine the Great; Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople; *Key Events*: Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Nicaea, Council of; Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus; *Key Places*: Antioch

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Patrikios

The etymological origin of *patrikios* lay with the ancient Roman patrician class, but as a dignity it dated to the reign of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE), as one of the highest titles in the imperial hierarchy. In late antiquity, the title of *patrikios* had a rather checkered history. In the Western Empire, it was often granted to the most powerful man in the state. Many military powers behind the throne were holders of this title, including Stilicho, Aetius, and Ricimer. Initially the eastern emperors in Constantinople tried to preserve the prestige of the title. In the fifth century, Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE) unsuccessfully attempted to disqualify eunuchs from becoming *patrikioi*. The exclusivity of the title *patrikios* was undermined further by Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE), who allowed those with ranks at or above *illustris* to hold it, which included many senators into the class.

During the upheavals of the seventh and eighth centuries, *patrikios* fared well, recovering some of its lost prestige as a title given to the highest officers of state, for instance in the *strategoi* commanding the imperial armies, the chief among them being known as *protopatrikios*. In late antiquity, the title of *patrikios* was granted to foreign leaders by the emperors, theoretically binding them to the court in Constantinople, notably the kings of Italy Odoacer (r. 476–493 CE) and Theoderic (r. 493–526 CE).

By the end of the 9th century at the latest, *patrikios* occupied the seventh position in the hierarchy, as recorded in all the *taktika*, the 9th- and 10th-century descriptions of the Byzantine court. As a group, they had the honor of being the second to greet the emperor following his coronation, after the *magistroi*. The ceremony around the creation of a *patrikios* took place in the *Chrysotriklinos*, one of the throne rooms of the Great Palace, where after performing obeisance before the emperor, the *patrikios* received the symbols of his new rank, ivory tablets inscribed with codicils, documents of appointment. The *patrikios* then went on a procession through the chapels of the imperial palace lighting candles before being presented with poems composed by the *demes*, the circus factions.

At the church of Hagia Sophia, the newly appointed *patrikios* would make a donation, the value of which depended on his other functions. A *strategos* gave 72 *nomismata*, a patrician with an office 50 *nomismata*, and a man with just the dignity 36 *nomismata*. The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, one of the *taktika*, recorded that a high officeholder or *strategos* raised to the rank of *patrikios* was expected to donate a total of 912 *nomismata* to the staff of the imperial palace and the church of Hagia Sophia. However, this expense could be quickly recouped. When the western envoy Liudprand of Cremona observed in 950 CE the annual ceremony during which the emperor distributed the *roga*, the yearly pay given to title and office holders, he saw *patrikioi* receiving 12 pounds of gold coins (864 *nomismata*) and one *skaramangion* (a long-sleeved belted tunic, like a kaftan) from the emperor's own hands. In the case of eunuchs, *patrikios* occupied the first place in the hierarchy throughout the ninth century, dropping to fourth in the *Escurial Taktikon* ca. 971–975 CE. Philotheos recorded that the eunuch *patrikioi* wore a white *chiton* (tunic) with gold decoration and a red cloak with a gold *tablion* (a decorated embroidered panel).

The *patrikioi* were not immune to the title inflation that struck the Byzantine hierarchy in the 11th century. In the *chrysobull*, an imperial document secured with a gold seal, issued by Michael VII (ca. 1071–1078) in 1074 for the Norman Duke Robert Guiscard, *patrikios* occupied the 8th position in what was an incomplete list, possibly equating with the 18th position overall. The annual *roga* was recorded as having dropped to four pounds of gold, or 288 *nomismata*. By the second half of the 12th century, *patrikios* had dropped out of the list of honors completely.

A female variant on the title existed, *zoste patrikia*, first attested in the person of Theoktiste, mother-in-law of the emperor Theophilos (r. 829–842 CE), ca. 830 CE. The *zoste patrikia* were attached to the empress's retinue and held a high rank in the 9th- and 10th-century *taktika*, occupying the fourth place, immediately behind those positions reserved for the imperial family and three places above the male title of *patrikios*. Philotheos recorded the insignia of the *zoste patrikia* as ivory tablets that she would receive from the emperor's hand.

This ceremony began in the Church of the Theotokos of the Pharos, one of the most important chapels in the Great Palace and home to some of the empire's most treasured relics. It was where the *zoste patrikia* received part of her official vestments, then proceeded to the throne room of the *Chrysotriklinos*, where she was

ROGA

A *roga* (pl. *rogai*) was what might be termed a salary or stipend paid to a Byzantine office and title holder. Much of our information on middle Byzantine *rogai* comes from Constantine VII's *De Ceremoniis*, which describes the methods and size of payments for certain groups. For instance, soldiers in the themes were paid only once every four years, although supplementary *rogai* were given to men serving on a campaign. *Strategoi* (governor-generals) in the eastern themes received *rogai* ranging from 40 pounds of gold coins to 5, depending on the importance of their command.

Rogai were not only paid as salaries to civil servants and soldiers but also to titleholders (an officeholder who also had a title would receive two payments). We know from a grant issued to Robert Guiscard in 1074 that the *rogai* for the *spatharokandidatoi*, *protospatharioi*, and *hypatoi* were 0.5, 1, and 2 pounds of gold coins, respectively, indicating that the amount doubled with each level of the hierarchy. *Rogai* attached to titles were not just awarded by the emperor, but they could also be purchased. The title of *spatharokandidatos*, for example, could be acquired for the price of 6 pounds of gold coins, but if the purchaser wished to receive a *roga* the cost increased to 10 pounds.

Liudprand of Cremona described the ceremony held in the Great Palace in Constantinople on Palm Sunday 950 CE where *rogai* were distributed to office and title holders. Important officials and courtiers received their *rogai* from the emperor himself and often required help to carry sacks of coins and bolts of cloth from the palace.

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handed the ivory tablets. There followed a long procession through the halls of the Great Palace, culminating in an acclamation by the *demes*, before entering Hagia Sophia, where the patriarch blessed the ivory tablets. The *zoste patrikia* then went to the Hall of the Magnaura, a building within the imperial palace used for large gatherings, where she gave gifts to the wives of the *strategoi* and *patrikioi*, before returning to the Church of the Theotokos of the Pharos to pray for the emperors. The title vanished in the 11th century; the last mention of a *zoste patrikia* in the written sources dated to 1018 in the *Synopsis Historion*, a history of Byzantium from 811 to 1057 CE, of John Skylitzes, but evidence from lead seals suggests that it continued in use until at least ca. 1070.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *De Administrando Imperio* (Constantine VII); *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; Master of Offices; *Taktikon Uspensky*; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Dignities; Hierarchy; Offices; *Individuals*: Arcadius; Constantine the Great; Comnena, Anna; Comnenus, Alexius I; Constantine the Great; Julian the Apostate; Justinian; Leo III, the Isaurian; Liudprand of Cremona; Narses; Theodosius II; *Groups and Organizations*: Demes; Eunuchs; *Key Events*: Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Nika Revolt; *Military: Scholae Palatinae; Tagmata; Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Proedros

The title of *proedros*, president, occurred in four different forms in the Byzantine Empire, each as a sign of exalted status: as a synonym for bishop, as president of the Senate; developing from this, as a dignity; and as a marker of precedence within another group. For ecclesiastical officials, *proedros* and *protoproedros* were commonly used in place of bishop or metropolitan, as the president of the clergy of their see, throughout the Byzantine period, and the title was frequently found on seals. The last written account of this episcopal use of *proedros* dates to 1140. *Proedros* achieved a more limited definition from the 13th century onward, when it came to designate a bishop granted a vacant see in addition to that which he already occupied. In this guise, the *proedros* oversaw the diocesan administration of the vacant see but was not actually consecrated as its bishop.

Various *proedroi* were attested in Byzantine history, for instance the *proedroi* of the *notarioi*, the chief notary or clerk. However, it was not until the second half of the 10th century that the most common form, that of a title, began to develop. The dignity of *proedros* was first granted by Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963–969 CE) around 963 CE to the eunuch Basil Lecapenus, the illegitimate son of Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE), as a reward for his help securing the throne following the death of Romanus II (r. 959–963 CE). It appeared that this grant had two meanings, the dignity of *proedros* being synonymous with the office of *proedros tes synkletou boules* (president of the Senate), and both versions appeared on Basil Lecapenus's seals. His official costume consisted of a white *chlamys* (a long cloak usually fastened over the right shoulder with a fibula) decorated with gold and two gold *tablia* (a decorative panel) embroidered with a gold ivy-leaf decoration over a pink silk *chiton* (tunic) with gold decoration, fastened with a sea-purple belt studded with precious stones. He received this garb from the emperor's own hand in a ceremony held in the throne room of the Chrysotriklinos in the Great Palace. On feast days, the *proedros* was acclaimed third, following the emperor and Caesar, as the "most splendid president of the Senate." In

the *Escurial Taktikon* (ca. 971–975 CE), a list or precedence that recorded the structure of the Byzantine hierarchy, *proedros* was recorded as a dignity reserved for eunuchs and occupied the first position in their hierarchy. It should be remembered that the dignity recorded in the *Taktikon* was unique. The only man to have held it up to this point was Basil Lecapenus. Furthermore, the use of *proedros* as a title ended when Lecapenus fell from power in 985 CE.

The title of *proedros* was rediscovered in the 11th century, and the individuals eligible to receive it grew steadily thereafter. After a gap of some 40 years, the title of *proedros*, without a connection to the Senate, was resurrected in a modified form by Constantine VIII (r. 1025–1028). The reborn title continued to be reserved for eunuchs; however, Constantine departed from earlier practice by granting it to many of his favorites at the same time. Some decades later, in the middle of the 11th century, *proedros* transitioned into a title that was granted to all state servants, not only eunuchs. It became a dignity commonly held by provincial dukes (military commanders) and important civil officials, as a mark of their exalted position within the Byzantine hierarchy. Once *proedros* became a title open to noneunuchs, the female form *proedrissa* appeared. However, this term was a mark of distinction for the wives of *proedroi*, not a title. The inclusion of *proedros* in the noneunuch hierarchy was almost certainly a symptom of the title inflation that was slowly eroding the Byzantine hierarchy in the 11th century. This process continued after 1060 when the prefix *proto* began to be added to the title as a mark of distinction for the more important *proedroi*, serving as a sign of the devaluation of the original title. In the *chrysobull*, an imperial document secured with a gold seal, issued for the Norman ruler of southern Italy Duke Robert Guiscard in 1074, the annual *roga*, an annual salary, of a *proedros* was recorded as 28 pounds of gold, or 2,016 *nomismata*. The same document listed *proedros* in a high position in the hierarchy, between *kouropalates* and *magistros*. By the beginning of the reign of Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118), *protoproedros* and *proedros* occupied the eighth and ninth positions in the court hierarchy. In the reform of the system of dignities carried out by Alexius I, much lauded by his daughter, Anna, in her work *The Alexiad*, *protoproedros* and *proedros* were relegated to lower levels of the hierarchy as senatorial titles, as opposed to those reserved for members of the Comnenian elite. This move led to the abandonment of the secular title of *proedros*, which is last mentioned in the sources in 1118.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Notarius*; Senate; *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; Dignities; Hierarchy; *Individuals*: Comnena, Anna; Comnenus, Alexius I; *Groups and Organizations*: Eunuchs; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Sebastos/Sebaste

Sebastos (masculine)/*sebaste* (feminine) was used as the Greek form of Augustus in the early Roman Empire, and it continued to form a part of the imperial title in the Byzantine period. We first find the dignity granted to those not occupying the imperial throne in the 11th century, starting with Maria Skleraina, the mistress of Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1055). She was honored with the title *sebaste* as a way of increasing her standing with relation to the two empresses Zoe and Theodora, who used the title Augusta. Other holders of the title in this period were deemed worthy of a special honor either because of their important political connections, such as Constantine Keroularios, nephew of the powerful patriarch Michael I, or because of their services to the empire, such as the generals Alexius Comnenus, the future emperor, and his brother Isaac Comnenus. The late 11th century saw many of Byzantium's eastern neighbors—for example, the king of Georgia Bagrat IV (r. 1027–1072) and his son George II (r. 1072–1089)—granted the title of *sebastos*, which they displayed on their coins. This procedure is an example of the Byzantine use of honors to bind neighboring powers to the imperial court. It is also representative of the extension of the title inflation observed in Byzantium at this time applying to the empire's neighbors who had previously been granted titles up to the rank of *kouropalates* but now received the honors of *sebastos* and Caesar.

Sebastos became the lynchpin of the entire Byzantine court hierarchy during the reign of Alexius Comnenus (r. 1081–1118). In the early 1080s, Alexius I began a restructuring of the system of titles to both combat the inflation of honors that had helped to undermine the imperial governments of the last half of the 11th century, and to concentrate power, wealth, and position within Byzantium in the hands of individuals within, or related to, the imperial family. Alexius used the title of *sebastos* as the basis for his restructuring, granting the title, and variations of it, widely to his relations and supporters.

In her work *The Alexiad,* Alexius's daughter, Anna, claimed that the initial impetus for this move was that Alexius had promised the rank of Caesar, a title second only to that of emperor at that time, to Nicephorus Melissenos, Alexius's brother-in-law and one-time competitor for the throne. This would have left Alexius's brother Isaac at a lower position in the hierarchy than an outsider, or at best equal. Alexius thus created the new tile of *sebastokrator* by combining two imperial epithets, *sebastos* and *autokrator* (the equivalent of the Latin *imperator*). Whether Anna's tale of the origins of the

new title is to be believed or not, Alexius had soon created an entire system of titles using *sebastos* as the root for his new ranks. Early beneficiaries of this new system of honors were his brothers, the *sebastokrator* Isaac, the *protosebastos* Adrian, and the *pansebastos* Nicephorus. By the 12th century a new hierarchy based on *sebastos* had emerged, in descending order of importance: *sebastokrator, panhypersebastos* (all-exalted *sebastos*), *sebastohypertatos* (most exalted *sebastos*), *protosebastos* (first *sebastos*), and *sebastos*. Anna considered this new hierarchy to be one of the signs of her father's genius as a master of the science of government and one of the principle ways by which he restored the Roman state to health. The title of *pansebastohypertatos* (all-most exalted *sebastos*) was added by John II Comnenus (r. 1118–1143). The *sebastoi* existed above the old hierarchy of titleholder; the new titles were a symbol of both the increased importance placed on family and nobility within Byzantine society, and of a new means of running the empire.

This analysis was abundantly clear when the first records of the mature Comnenian system appeared in the synodal lists of 1147, 1157, 1166, and 1170, each of which contained a large proportion of *sebastoi*, ranked according to degree of kinship to the emperor. One repercussion of the Comnenian system based on a kin relationship to the imperial family was that women frequently carried titles. As in the Middle Byzantine system with *magistrissa* and *proedrissa,* the Comnenian system did have women who held a title because they were married to someone who had been granted the male (in this example *magistros* or *proedros*) version by the emperor. However, there is also evidence of women being the recipients of titles, and many seals that proudly proclaimed their owner to have received their title "by appointment" as opposed to through marriage. This distinction was obviously a significant mark of status if worthy to be included on the limited space available on a seal.

By the second half of the 12th century, kinship relations had begun to supersede the hierarchy based on *sebastos* within the titulature. Being a close relation of the emperor was regarded more highly than any title, and there was a separate and higher class of *gambros sebastoi* (*gambros*, brothers, nephews, and cousins-in-law of the emperors) above the regular *sebastoi*. The development of even more highly exaggerated kinship-based elite led to a decline in the importance of the dignity of *sebastos* visible by the early 13th century when it was the usual title granted to officials such as the *dux* (governor) of a theme (province). Niketas Choniates recorded that the emperor Alexius III Angelos (r. 1195–1203) even sold the title of *sebastos* to lowly tradesmen and foreigners. As the dignity of *sebastos* itself declined, so newer inflated versions appeared in the hierarchy, such as *panhypersebastohypertatos* (all-exalted, most exalted *sebastos*) and *protopansebastohypertatos* (first, most exalted all-*sebastos*), both added in the late 12th century. By the time that the handbook of titles and ceremonies of Pseudo-Kodinos was produced in the 14th century, *sebastos* had fallen to the 78th place in the hierarchy.

Jonathan Shea

See also: *Organization and Administration*: Dignities; Hierarchy; *Individuals*: Comnena, Anna; Comnenus, Alexius I; *Military*: *Dux*; Themes

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Senate

In the early Byzantine period, from the third to the sixth century, the senatorial order was rooted in well-established, landholding elite families who also held political offices of the empire. The Senate was greatly expanded in the fourth and fifth centuries with the emergence of Constantinople as New Rome. Founded in 330 CE, the city's architectural monuments reflected its imperial aspirations, including facilities for both emperor and Senate. Constantine welcomed western elites who were willing to resettle in the east, offering land in Anatolia to those willing to build homes and establish neighborhoods in Constantinople, even providing free grain to those ready to settle. To increase their numbers, Constantine promoted many eastern officials to senatorial rank. At first, Constantine assigned secondary status to the Senate of Constantinople, compared with that of Rome, whose senators held the title of *clarissimus*, which was hereditary. Senators of New Rome were given the lesser title of *clari*. This custom changed during the reign of Constantine's son, Constantius (r. 337–361 CE), who made senatorial rank in Constantinople equal to that of Rome. During the century, the Senate increased from around 300 at the start to more than 2,000 by century's end, though new distinctions had been introduced. Since the rank of *clarissimus* was held by all senators and was hereditary, higher levels of *spectabalis* and still higher, *illustris*, were introduced, the latter being later refined further into *magnificus* and *gloriosus*. These ranks could be achieved only by holding office in the military or civil administration; they could not be inherited and were dependent on imperial appointment. Thus, emperors were able to make new senators by appointment but were not obligated to provide existing senators with imperial posts. With the Senate's continued expansion in the sixth century, senators of the lowest rank of *clarissimi* were no longer expected to participate in games or festivals in the capital, being required to keep to their provinces instead of the capital. By then, only senators of the highest rank met together in Constantinople and had the right to speak. This elite status ensured senators respect and protection from imperial officials, including tax collectors.

While the Senate was not a legislative body, it played an important advisory and ceremonial role, and at times of crisis it could act independently. In 602 CE, after

Emperor Maurice was overthrown by an army mutiny that brought Phocas (r. 602–610 CE) to power, the Senate supported the usurper as emperor. When Phocas's rule devolved into a reign of terror, the Senate appealed to the Byzantine governor of Carthage to rescue the state, which brought Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) to power. Later in the century, acting in defense of order, the Senate removed Heraklonas and Martina from power in favor of Constans II (r. 641–668 CE). When the latter considered leaving Constantinople and establishing a new Byzantine capital in Sicily, amid the turmoil of the seventh century, the Senate protested.

By this time, however, the Byzantine state had dramatically changed due to the economic, social, and political dislocations of the period. Existing elite and senatorial families were largely wiped away and such status lost any hereditary link, becoming tightly bound to imperial patronage and to civil or military appointments. By the 10th and 11th centuries, senatorial status was achieved with an imperial grant of the rank of *protospatharios* and above (with approximately 10 ranks below, and several more ranks above). Senators were expected to live in Constantinople and to participate in imperial ceremonies. Such rank, or title, carried with it a salary (*roga*), which was paid annually in a ceremony that took place in the imperial palace before Easter. Bishop Liudprand of Cremona, a western ambassador to Constantinople in the 10th century, left a vivid description of this ceremony. The bishop's envy and admiration at the sight of so much wealth being distributed stirred the emperor to offer him a gift as well. These ranks, or titles, must be distinguished from political or military office. A senatorial rank holder could be without a post in government, but a government official would also have a rank, corresponding to the level of the appointment.

By the mid-11th century, emperors welcomed merchants and businessmen as senators, men who had been hitherto excluded, likely to enrich the treasury and possibly in recognition of the growing importance of Byzantium's mercantile class. While merchants could generate more revenue elsewhere than investing in a senatorial position, they sought the prestige of senatorial status and paid significant amounts to gain it. The Senate's importance subsequently declined with the emergence of the Komnenoi Dynasty (11th–12th centuries) because of the dynasty's rank inflation and reliance on extended family members, rather than the traditional state bureaucracy. The Senate made few later appearances, and rather inglorious ones at that. At the end of the 12th century, the Senate rejected a request for senatorial contributions for an unpopular tax levied to pay tribute to German Emperor Henry VI, who was threatening the empire. Just a few years later, during the Fourth Crusade, the Senate selected an emperor who not only did not take power but was also executed shortly thereafter. By the following century, the Senate as a distinguished group ceased to exist in all but memory.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Organization and Administrations*: Dignities; Hierarchy; Taxes; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Constantine the Great; Justinian; Liudprand of Cremona; Maurice; Phocas; Theodosius II; *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; *Key Places*: Byzantium; Great Palace of Constantinople

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Suffragia

The administrative core of the Roman Empire was the *comitatus*, the court, which was centered on the person of the emperor, whether he was located on or near the frontiers. After the fourth century, the center became Constantinople in the east and Ravenna in the west, for by this time the city of Rome had long ceased to be an imperial administrative center. The court included the household of the emperor and the many servants needed to manage and run the household, the senior staff of the major administrative departments of state, including the master of offices and the supreme financial officers, the Count of the Sacred Largess (*comes sacrarum largitionum*) and the Count of the Private Purse (*comes rei privatae*), the empire's senior legal officer, senior military commanders, and praetorian prefects, who oversaw the provinces of the empire, which were grouped together into units called dioceses, were presided over by *vicarii*. It was the large administrative "brain" of the empire that supervised thousands of officials in the capital and provinces, who ruled millions of subjects. How did the empire find candidates to fill this administrative need? Roman elites regularly nominated candidates to fill available positions.

Access to elites was a means of opportunity and advancement. Those with power served as patrons to those who wanted in, who would in turn expand the patron's sphere of influence. A common practice for filling the staffing needs of the imperial government was to rely on recommendations that were made to the emperor or other senior administrative officers. The *suffragium* was the recommendation (the plural form of this Latin word is *suffragia*), and the *suffragator* was the patron who made the recommendation. In practice, the client who benefited from this intervention offered a fee or honorarium to the *suffragator* for this service. The formal agreement for this transaction was known as *contractus suffragii*. In 394 CE, the imperial government required that such a transaction be conferred as legally binding through a ceremony known as *sponsio*, where the client formally swore to make payment.

Such payment was worthwhile because the value of the appointment in the imperial government stemmed not from the salary attached to the position, which was not particularly high in the early Byzantine Empire, but from the elite status of the position and the privileges that derived from such rank as well as from associated opportunities for enrichment. Given these benefits, there was tremendous demand for imperial positions, and official posts were regularly rotated to make room for those seeking opportunities, particularly from aristocratic families. Yet, the demand for imperial posts exceeded the available positions each year.

While emperors selected the highest-level officials directly, the imperial office relied on recommendations for administrative staff at lower levels. The

recommendations that carried most influence were those coming from the senior staff in the *comitatus*, that is, from those closest to the emperor. Thus, these posts, such as that of provincial governor, were not filled by subordinate staff in the provinces who were promoted to a higher post in the same unit but by new appointees from the outside. Frequent change in office not only made room for others, but it also generated revenue gained from the new officeholders.

Suffragia emerged to address this need and was well established by the time of Emperor Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE). Emperor Julian (361–363 CE) rejected the system, preferring to appoint officials solely by merit and not by recommendation. To support this reform and discourage the traditional practice, he decreed that anyone who paid money for a *suffragium* but did not receive an official appointment could not get that money back. Such reform was short-lived. By the time of Emperor Theodosius I (r. 378–395 CE), the *suffragium* became a binding contract (as discussed above) and, it is alleged, was a major source of revenue for high-ranking palace eunuchs. By the mid-fifth century, the practice of purchasing an imperial post had become so routine that the imperial government was forced to decree that provincial governors were to swear an oath that no financial considerations were made in obtaining their office.

In the later fifth and into the sixth century, the financial incentive for *suffragia* shifted from the senior staff and other elites to the imperial treasury itself, with the bulk of the fee going directly to the treasury rather than to the *suffragator*, who received only a portion. The system then expanded from provincial governorships to higher positions in the imperial government, with the expectation that the benefits derived from the position would exceed the high price paid for it. Moreover, the imperial government could even increase the price to obtain additional review. It should be noted that the positions most at risk were those of the middle and lesser imperial offices; military posts were much less affected by this practice.

The political reforms of Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), which aimed at increasing imperial efficiency, sought to eliminate *suffragia*. Justinian recognized that *suffragia* led to the further exploitation of provincials by officials seeking to make good on their financial investment. He sought to guarantee that state institutions and policies would not be subverted for private gain. Justinian required oaths for provincial governors and the *vicarii*, who oversaw dioceses (collections of provinces), that they had not obtained their office through financial means. To reduce the likelihood that provincial authorities would exploit their subjects, Justinian increased the salary of governors and other officials. In 554 CE, as the empire was restoring authority in Italy, Justinian decreed that provincial elites and bishops were to make their own nominations for governor, which the emperor would then ratify, as a way of bypassing *suffragia* from the outside. His successor, Justin II (r. 565–574 CE), extended this rule to the entire empire. Despite such imperial efforts, *suffragia* continued for the rest of the early Byzantine period.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Offices; Province; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Julian the Apostate; Justinian; *Key Events: Corpus Iuris Civilis*

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Taktikon Uspensky (842 CE)

Documents listing the precedence of late Roman and Byzantine titles and offices, known as *taktika* in Greek and *notitiae* in Latin, exist from the 4th to the 14th centuries, although most date to the 9th and 10th centuries. These middle Byzantine *taktika* are some of the most useful sources for identifying the structure of the imperial hierarchy and the officers that may have served in the capital or provinces at a given time.

The *Taktikon Uspensky* was first edited in 1898 by Theodore Uspensky, after whom it is named, and subsequently by V. Beneševič in 1926/7 CE and Nicolas Oikonomides in 1972. The document is written in Greek and is preserved in Jerusalem in *Cod. Hierosolymitanus S. Sepulchri* no. 39, fols. 194–195v (12th/13th centuries). Copied three centuries after it was originally compiled, there are many errors in grammar and content (e.g., omissions, repetitions, inversions), which suggest that the copyist was unfamiliar with the language of the *taktikon*.

The *Taktikon Uspensky* is one of the most complete of the 9th- and 10th-century *taktika*, including officials from across the empire, at all ranks, of all genders (men, women, and eunuchs), and in all parts of government, including the military, the judiciary, the fisc, the chancery, and the church. It has, for the most part, the same array of dignities and officers as the much-longer *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (899 CE) and preserves many more low-ranking dignities than the later *Taktikon Beneševič* (934–944 CE) and *Escorial Taktikon* (971–975 CE). All four *taktika*, along with the evidence of Byzantine lead seals, are valuable witnesses to the growth of the empire, the development of provincial administration, and the transformation of titles and offices. The *Taktikon Uspensky* is one of the earliest written sources for the middle Byzantine theme system.

The full title of the work as it appears on the manuscript is “Short *taktikon* made under Michael, Christ-loving emperor (*philochristou despotou*), and his most orthodox and saint mother (*orthodoxotates kai agias autou metros*), Theodora.” These individuals are Michael III (r. 842–867 CE) and his mother, Theodora, who served as regent from 842 to 856 CE. Nicolas Oikonomides took the regency as the broadest date for the *Taktikon Uspensky* and narrowed it further by referencing a specific office that appears in the document: the *droungarios* (naval commander) or the *Aigaion Pelagos* (Aegean Sea). By 843 CE, a *strategos* (general and military governor of a *theme*) is known for *Aigaion Pelagos*, superseding the *droungarios*, leading Oikonomides to propose the dates 842–843 CE. Most scholars have followed Oikonomides in this dating, although some internal details would argue against it, notably the presence of a *strategos* of Crete when the island was under Arab rule.

Tibor Živković has proposed a redating of the *taktikon* to the reign of Michael I (r. 811–813 CE), arguing that the title was amended by a later scribe and that the work constitutes a survey of the provincial administration following the death of Nicephorus I (r. 802–811 CE), who had initiated administrative reforms. On this view, which has been accepted most recently by John Haldon and Leslie Brubaker, the *Taktikon Uspensky* presents the *theme* system as it was developing at the beginning of the ninth century, but before it had acquired its full administrative apparatus, most notably in the form of *protonotarioi*.

It proceeds from the most important individuals in the empire, with the order based, first, on the dignity and, second, on the office itself. There are roughly five groups: (1) high dignitaries and functionaries, often but not always bearing the title of *patrikios*; (2) *protospatharioi*; (3) *spatharokandidatoi*; (4) *spatharioi*; and (5) dignitaries and functionaries of lower rank. Offices are occasionally repeated, accounting for the various ranks that the holder of a given office could have.

The list of precedence begins with the highest-ranking dignitaries in the empire (*kaisar, nobelissimos, kouropalates*, and probably *zoste patrikia*), all of which were titles that, in the ninth century, were conferred only on members of the imperial family. The patriarch of Constantinople is missing, which suggested to Oikonomides that this document could have been compiled before the elevation of Methodius to the patriarchate on March 3, 843 CE. Although several lines are missing in the manuscript, the highest-ranking officials on staff in the imperial and patriarchal palaces seem to follow *magistros, raiktor, synkellos*, and *praipositos*.

Military officers, first and foremost the *strategos* of the *Anatolikon*, continue this first group, followed by other high officers, like the eparch, *logothete* of the *genikon, quaestor*, and *orphanotrophos*. The *stategos* of the *Anatolikon* was historically the most important military office in the empire and continued to hold the first rank in 10th-century *taktika* even as Byzantine military strategy changed during a period of conquest and territorial expansion. The list of *strategoi* seems to be comprehensive and would have been a model order in cases when a *strategos* held a different dignity; in the second place under the second group are "*strategoi* and *protospatharioi* according to their commands." This is echoed a few lines later—"other officials according to their functions"—emphasizing that the *taktikon* was not a comprehensive document.

Lain Wilson

See also: *Government and Politics: Kletorologion* of Philotheos; *Magistros; Nobelissimos; Patrikios; Organization and Administration*: Dignities; Hierarchy; Offices; *Military: Strategos*; Themes

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Vestiarion

The *vestiarion* ("wardrobe") was a Byzantine state treasury of valuable objects that was managed by a department led by a *chartoularios*. He was also responsible for the minting of coins and the provision of arms for the military and later, in the middle Byzantine period, for the navy as well. The treasury and mint were in the imperial palace complex in Constantinople. By the late Byzantine period, the *vestiarion* became the sole treasury for the empire and the Palaiologan emperors traveled on campaign with substantial portions of the state treasury. The origins of the *vestiarion* are found in the civil administration of the early Byzantine Empire.

The civil administration of the early Byzantine Empire was organized into large regional areas known as prefectures that were subdivided into dioceses, which, in turn were divided into provinces, with approximately 100 provinces throughout the empire. The praetorian prefects maintained oversight of the *vicarii* of the dioceses, who supervised the governors of their provinces, who then oversaw cities within their territories, each of which was managed by individual city councils. The praetorian prefect was also responsible for the management and distribution of rations and fodder to support the army and civil service and for the upkeep of roads, granaries, and other public works that were outside the jurisdiction of other military or civil administrative units. Thus, each year, it was necessary for the prefects to estimate the annual needs of their prefectures and assign a tax, called an indiction, to gather the necessities (with superindictions imposed when sufficient revenues were not generated). The implementation of these indictions was handled by the *vicarii*, governors, and provincial cities.

The finances that made the civil as well as military administrations work were managed by independent fiscal departments called the *res privata* and the *sacrae largitiones*, which were part of the imperial court (*comitatus*) and supervised by a count (*comes*). The *res privata* managed all land and property that was owned by the state, while the *sacrae largitiones* managed the minting of coinage, the mining of precious metals, the payment of monetary gifts (called donatives) to the troops, the manufacture and distribution of special arms and armor, and the production of clothing for the court, army, and civil administration. Among the larger departments within the office of *sacrae largitiones* was the *sacrum vestiarium,* which was led by a *primicerius*, a title that became a court rank for eunuchs in the middle Byzantine period.

The 7th century marked the end of the early Byzantine period (4th–6th centuries) and its transition into the middle period (7th–12th centuries). The cataclysmic, even if

victorious, Persian War (602–629 CE), followed by the shock of the Arab invasions, which deprived Byzantium of the wealthy provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa, with Anatolia (roughly modern Turkey) barely remaining, while the Balkans were overrun by Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs, reduced and impoverished the empire. The extensive and expensive imperial bureaus and offices of the early Byzantine Empire were wiped away and a new, more streamlined governmental structure emerged. Civil and military authority was merged in new provincial units called *themata*, led by a commander (*strategos*). As a result, the praetorian prefectures were eliminated and various units that had been supervised by the prefect became independent government departments. The *logothetes tou dromou* ("secretary of the course") oversaw the public post, imperial safety, and diplomacy; the *logothetes tou stratiotikou* ("secretary of the military") was in charge of military supplies, recruitment, and funding; and the *logothetes tou genikou* ("secretary of general finances") oversaw general finances and taxes. In addition, there were two major treasurers, the *chartoularios* of the *sakellion*, who oversaw keeping track of imperial revenue entering and leaving the treasury, and the *chartoularios* of the *vestiarion*, who oversaw the mint and the production and storage of military armaments.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: *Cursus Publicus; Magistros; Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Fiscal System; Hierarchy; Offices; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Bulgars; Slavs; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with; *Military*: *Comitatenses; Limitanei; Strategos*; Themes; *Key Places*: Egypt

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Organization and Administration

OVERVIEW ESSAY

The 30 entries in this section examine several aspects of law in action throughout the history of Byzantine society, from its beginning in the 4th century to its end in the 15th century after the Ottoman siege and conquest of Constantinople. Some of these entries cover the legal profession (e.g., "*Institutes*"; "Judge, Justice"; "Law") or some aspect of legal procedure (e.g., "Penalties"; "Usury"; "Writing"). Other entries are concerned with the civil, ecclesiastical, and military administration conducted under the authority of the emperor (e.g., "Bureaucracy"; "Clergy"; "Dignities"; "Hierarchy"; "Offices"; "Recruitment"; "Slavery"), with the territorial arrangement of the empire (e.g., "Municipal Administration"; "Province"), and with some unavoidable consequences of imperial administration (e.g., "Corruption"). Finally, many entries address aspects of the economic administration of the empire, which made possible the survival of the extensive and complex Byzantine state into the 15th century (e.g., "Environment"; "Feudalism"; "Fiscal System"; "Guilds"; "Market"; "State Property"; "Taxes"; "Weights").

Law and the Civil Service

Byzantium was a kind of administered society. Some scholars have compared it, with obvious exaggeration, with the socialist nations of modern times. Byzantine administration was, however, always consistent with law. The Byzantine Empire was undoubtedly an autocracy, but it always operated under the rule of law. The emperor controlled all branches of government, finance, and administration completely. He also controlled the judiciary and the armed forces, and he exercised great influence over ecclesiastical affairs and economic life (see "Law").

However, Byzantine emperors could not rule alone. The effective governance of the empire inevitably involved a close reliance on sometimes untrustworthy courtiers, relatives, officials, and friends. But because the empire contained vast territories, autocracy was an inescapable necessity for the delegation of imperial power. Because of that, it permitted the growth of a sophisticated state bureaucracy primarily dedicated to the establishment and maintenance of central government power through the

collection of taxes and the administration of justice. Consequently, to support the expenses and needs of such a central government and bureaucracy, a powerful local civil and military administration developed to collect taxes and keep the public order. This structure, initially dependent on the central administration, increased in power over time based on an always more extensive economic and military autonomy, so that there occurred a kind of "feudalistic" transition within the empire that opened ways for external enemies to destroy the Byzantine state.

No contemporary state in Western Europe had anything like the class of semiprofessional administrators who ran the Byzantine Empire. This civil service was one distinct element within Byzantine political culture, which was also characterized by the imperial court, the military leadership, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the provincial aristocracy. Facing fierce and continual assaults on its frontiers, the empire required a strong administration and a strong military, both of which, in turn, required considerable taxes that could be collected and distributed only by a complicated financial administration. But in return they ensured the empire's survival in the face of formidable external pressure. All these questions have been considered in the entries concerning bureaucracy and the fiscal system.

The Byzantine civil service included three significant groups. The first was the imperial administration headquartered in the palace and directly supervised by the emperor or his most trusted ministers. The second group was responsible for the formulation of policy and the direction of state finance. Finally, there was the provincial administration, which was connected to the themes, military/political divisions of the provinces charged with supporting the armies that protected them (see "Province"), and the municipal administration under the direct control of the central and provincial levels but with a significant responsibility for the crucial tax collection (see "Municipal Administration"; "Fiscal System"; "Taxes").

The Byzantine bureaucracy was not large in terms of numbers. According to modern research, the central civil service in the ninth century CE (i.e., the middle period of Byzantine history) comprised 13 separate departments employing perhaps 500 to 600 individuals. However, the massive interference of the state in the public and private affairs in the Byzantine Empire gave the bureaucracy an enormous power, which led therefore to increasing cases of corruption, such as the sale of public offices (see "Corruption").

Early Byzantine History (fourth–seventh centuries)

In the first stage of the history of Byzantine state (fourth–seventh centuries), six high-ranking officials dominated the central administration concerning the regulation of the imperial business, protocol, and paperwork. The *praepositus sacri cubiculi* ran the imperial household with overall responsibility for the *castrenses* (eunuchs attending the emperor), who supervised subordinate staff and the imperial wardrobe. Considering that many of the servants of the emperor, as well as many of the workers of the state factories, were slaves, a special entry on "Slavery" has been included here as an essential institution of the Byzantine Empire throughout its existence.

Another critical official was the *magister officiorum*, chief of the palatine administration and general supervisor of the *scrinia* (secretariats) dealing with a considerable range of administrative and political matters. He also oversaw the organization of the essential *cursus publicus* (the imperial postal system), the *Scholae Palatinae* (the palace guard), the *fabricae* (the imperial arms manufacture), and the *agentes in rebus* (police forces) (see "Offices").

The *comes sacrarum largitionum* headed the imperial treasury. He supervised the collection of indirect taxes, such as customs duties, and direct levies of precious metal used to fund the periodical donatives for the army, as well as the administration of state mints, mines, quarries, and textile factories (see "Environment"). Control of the monetary survey, after the crucial reforms instituted by the emperors Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), was a substantial element for the consistency of the Byzantine state (see "Weights").

The *comes rei privatae* also headed another section of the imperial treasury—the imperial properties, their leasing, rents, sale, and revenues. This land was formally distinct from the state property, which was given to individuals based on the amount of tax imposed (see "State Property"). The *quaestor sacri palatii* supervised the judicial functions of the emperor and was responsible for drafting imperial legislation (including the substantial legal codes of the time of Theodosius II and Justinian) (see "Judge, Justice"; "Law"). Finally, the *primicerius notariorum* headed the team of *notarii* (imperial secretariats independent of the magister officiorum) and was also in charge of issuing documents of appointment for high-ranking officials and drawing up the hierarchy of the imperial administration (see "Offices"; "Writing").

All these issues have been examined in the essays devoted to "Bureaucracy," "Dignities," and "Hierarchy." But one should consider that diplomacy was one of the main challenges of the Byzantine administration, as it was essential to control the frontiers of the empire and to save military efforts for the empire to survive. This vital information concerning Byzantine politics and bureaucracy is considered in the "Diplomacy" Essay. Another significant element of public service in Byzantium was the justice administration. A substantial portion of the high-qualified officials of the empire in this period were the judges (*kritai*), who had the function to interpret and apply the law and collaborate in maintaining the public order, especially through the application of a penal code (see "Judge, Justice"; "Penalties").

The church was also a fundamental part of imperial ideology, as the emperor, considered God's representative on earth, believed he had the competence to organize and intervene in ecclesiastical affairs as much as the bishops and the patriarch of Constantinople. The clergy was thus seen as an important part of the imperial administration, not separate from or opposite to the imperial power (see "Clergy").

At the provincial level, the basic unit of government throughout the empire was the province (114 in the time of Theodosius II, r. 408–450 CE), each administered by a governor. The governor was responsible for local, judicial, financial, and administrative affairs; he supervised the city governments, oversaw the public works, and carried out specific imperial directives. The provinces were grouped into bigger units, the dioceses (14 in that time), each under control of a *vicarius* (deputy of the praetorian

prefect), who had a general supervisory role and, in some cases, heard appeals from provincial courts.

Dioceses formed the most significant administrative units known as prefectures, four in number (Gaul, Italy, Illyricum, and the East), each in the charge of a praetorian prefect. These praetorian prefects were the most powerful officials in the early Byzantine Empire, just under the emperor. They had overall responsibility for the administration of the empire and in judicial matters (they normally served on behalf of the emperor as final judges of appeal for their territories). They also headed important financial departments, overseeing the levying of taxation (as the fundamental land tax—*capitatio-iugatio* system—was calculated, collected, and redistributed through each prefecture) and had to ensure the supply and transport of grain to the empire's capital cities.

All these high-ranking officials (prefects, vicarii, and governors) had their own permanent administrative department (*officium*), formed by different types of officials (*adiutores*, *excerptores*, *notarii*, etc.). Despite the military terminology normally used to describe this civilian administration, they had no military functions, as the army was supervised by the generals (*duces*) directly dependent on the emperor, to avoid extensive accumulation of power in the hands of a few officials. The ways of recruiting officials and soldiers, and an essential tax system, which was designed under the reigns of Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), remained almost unaltered till the end of the empire (see "Fiscal System"; "Province"; "Taxes").

At a local level, under the provinces, the city (*civitas* or *polis*) governed a surrounding district (*territorium*) from which taxes were collected. The members (*curiales*) of the municipal council (*curia*) supplied basic urban needs and were ultimately responsible, even using their property and wealth for the collection of taxes if the urban population could or would not pay (see "Fiscal System"; "Taxes"). The *curiales* also had to supply bread and water, primary education, and police and maintain baths and other public facilities for the urban population.

This system of collecting municipal taxes became a major cause for the decadence of the cities all over the empire (especially in the western part and the Balkans) and the progressive extinction of municipal autonomy in the sixth and seventh centuries CE, as the *curiales* preferred to become church officials or flee for the capital or the rural areas to escape their heavy fiscal duties. Cities started to be ruled directly by the provincial governors, and the imperial authorities also empowered bishops and landowners to assume administrative responsibilities for the city (see "Municipal Administration").

An exception to the decadence of local autonomy was Constantinople that, after 359, was governed by a high-ranking official, the urban prefect (*eparchos*), who controlled the administrative, financial, and judicial affairs of the city, and in particular supervised officials in charge of the supply of bread, oil, metal, and wine (*annona*), the maintenance of aqueducts, statues, and public buildings, and the organization of games and public entertainments; he also had the supervision of the different guilds of traders and craftsmen operating in the capital (whose basic rules were conserved through a legal text known as the *Book of the Eparch*). Corporations were a substantial piece of the economic organization of Byzantium, as it was continuously an essentially

urban and commercial empire whose means of subsistence came above all from abroad, though it had an agrarian basis, like every preindustrial society. The entries on the *annona*, markets, and guilds discuss extensively the economic responsibilities of the urban prefect.

Dark Ages (eighth–ninth centuries)

In the following phase of Byzantine history ("Dark Ages": eighth–ninth centuries CE), significant changes in the imperial administration took place because of the severe crisis of the empire and the contraction of its boundaries. A new territorial structure made its appearance, probably after the late seventh century CE, with the introduction of themes (*thema, themata*): they were military divisions and territorial units administered by a general (*strategos*) who combined both military and civil power. Inside the theme, local land possessors served as soldiers when necessary and then went on to farm their properties (*stratiotike* or *ktema*). By the end of the seventh century CE, most of Byzantine territories were integrated into these larger military units, so that in the eighth–ninth centuries CE, the central government tried to diminish the power of the theme *strategoi*, by dividing the large themes into smaller units.

With the emergence of the themes, the central administration and its former complex bureaucracy became more simplified. Praetorian prefectures disappeared, and individual departments became independent under the direction of the so-called *logothetes*, specialized ministers. The leading civil official of the court was the *sacellarius*, charged with the general coordination and control of the different *officia*. Cities continued their decadence and transformation into smaller units in size and population (*kastra*). They commonly became ruralized and governed by military officials subordinated to the theme *strategos* (see "Province").

Middle Byzantine Period (9th–12th centuries)

The Middle Byzantine Empire (9th–12th centuries CE) was an age of recovery and consolidation. The central administration was reinforced at the expense of the *strategoi* of the themes and the landowners of the provinces. The state strictly controlled the economic activities (especially in the capital) under the leadership of the eparch of the city. The individual *logothetes* became heads of their departments, and above all the *logothetes tou dromou*, who was responsible for the imperial postal service, but he was also responsible for ceremonial duties at the court, protection of the emperor, collection of political information, and general supervision of public affairs. He also functioned as the chief official in the diplomatic service (see "Diplomacy").

The imperial chancery also reorganized under the command of the *protoasekretis*, a close collaborator of the emperor. In the provinces, the themes consolidated, but also the *tagmata*, movable professional military contingents under the direct control of the emperor, attempted to keep under close supervision the powerful *strategoi* of larger themes. The commander in chief of these *tagmata* was the *domestikon* of the *scholon*, one of the highest military officials of the empire.

Despite the efforts of the emperors to maintain control over the centralized structures of the state, some state institutions became increasingly feudal in their functioning. Among these Byzantine institutions, the *charistikon* and *pronoia* are especially remarkable. The *charistikon* was a system whereby private individuals or institutions were given conditional control of monasteries for a limited period that might run to the recipient's lifetime or a number of generations. The beneficiary (*charistikarios*) was formally a supervisor, not a full owner, and he was supposed to wield administrative power without interfering in ecclesiastical affairs, but he could extensively exploit the resources of the territory. The *pronoia*, on the other hand, was technically a grant of a certain amount of tax revenues derived from specific properties and their neighbors, but in fact the holder of a *pronoia* also received the rights to the rents of some of the property assigned to him, and even exercised power over the labor services of the inhabitants of the territory (*paroikoi*). That is the reason for its comparison with the vassal-landlord feudalist institutions of Western Europe.

Macedonian emperors tried to keep this phenomenon under control, but during the period of the Comnenus Dynasty (1081–1185) things changed, and Alexius I was largely prone to concede this type of benefice to the members of his family—and not only on his own properties, but also on public ones. This extension of the "feudal" institution was one of the main causes that pushed the empire to its final dissolution and extinction, along with the crisis and collapse of the thematic structure in the territorial administration (see "Feudalism").

Later Byzantine History (13th–15th centuries)

In the last period (13th–15th centuries), after the Latin conquest and control of Constantinople (1204), the Palaeologian Dynasty attempted to restore the previous state administration over the scarce territories that still were under its control, despite the pressure of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the relative conservation of a central administrative structure, governed now by a prime minister (*mesazon*), the advance of the "feudal" institutions was unstoppable. The big landowners of the large territories (Thessaly Thrace (Macedonia), were increasingly more powerful and they inherited more and more extensive *pronoiai* and took over the judiciary functions as well. Most of the cities of the empire escaped the control of the central state but fell under the authority of the territorial magnates (see "Feudalism"). Foreign mercenaries almost totally dominated the army, but the crises of the finances of the empire made it frequently revolt (see "Recruitment"). The Byzantine central government attempted to introduce a new tax on the agrarian production (*sitokrizon*) in an attempt to reverse this financial insufficiency, but it was useless (see "Fiscal System"; "Taxes"). The advance of the dissolvent forces was too strong for a weak state government, and finally it was not possible to continue to identify an imperial administration as such, but only a set of territories merely nominally connected with the emperor in Constantinople. The Byzantine Empire that coped with the siege of Constantinople by the troops of Mehmet II was limited just to the administration of the capital. Constantinople, a city without an empire with a ruined public treasury

and a diminished army, was incapable of resisting the onslaught of the victorious Turks.

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Annona

In the city of Rome, the term *annona* was applied to the annual crop yield, which later evolved to mean both the tax on land produce and the handout of food (a form of dole, an ancient system of welfare). In the late Roman Empire and in Byzantium, the tax was transformed into a land tax but kept its status as the most important tax and the main source of state income. The *annona* was a universal tax, and no land was exempt. The imperial states, the domains of the ecclesiastical communities, and the lands of private persons were all subject to this burden.

Originally, the *annona civica* was an exceptional tax in kind imposed on certain provinces in case of emergency, usually to supply the city of Rome with corn in periods of a famine, or to feed the army during military campaigns. The amount of this extraordinary burden, and its distribution among the communities affected by it, were determined by the indiction (*indictio*), a special order of the emperor. It was a financial plan issued each September that was created to fulfill state needs. Moreover, the state retained the right to issue a supplementary financial plan (*superindictio*) if the need arose.

During the civil wars of the third century CE, indictions became frequent. The wars, the reforms, and the increase in the number of officials were costly, and inflation reduced the resources of the state. Therefore, *annona militaris* was established by Roman Emperor Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE) and, from his reign onward, the requisitions in kind destined for the military were levied as an irregular "superindiction."

Due to the severe economic problems, Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) had to systematically reorganize the fiscal system. In the first place he made the *annona a* regular tax, not extraordinary. Although its permanent amount was not fixed, the indiction imposed every year remained. Diocletian aimed to distribute the burden of taxation with logic and consistency, by rationalizing and balancing out the injustices of the previous periods. The exact date of his reforms has for a long time been a subject of debate, but it can most probably be dated to the last decade of the third century. Moreover, there is still no consensus on many major and still more minor points of interpretation.

Besides the implementation of a regular levy, Diocletian also introduced a new procedure to calculate the tax burden. This procedure has become known in the modern literature as the *capitatio-iugatio* system. As the first emperor with a clear understanding of economic issues, he established a connection between the cultivated land and the people who lived and worked in it and, thus, managed to determine the productivity of the area. This new taxation system was grounded on two basic taxes: the *capitatio* was a tax based on heads, which included all the people of the empire and was paid in money or in kind, according to the state's needs; the *iugatio* was the taxation of agricultural production, which replaced an older land tax. Its difference represents the fact that the sum of the tax included not only the extent of the land but also the quality of the soil and the type of cultivated product.

The tax would be defined separately for those two components, but there was no *iugum* (piece of land) without *caput* (person) or *caput* without *iugum*. Naturally, the fiscal administration intended to establish a balance between both elements and to count the *caput* for each available *iugum*. In addition, there was an insufficient labor force in the empire, making this task rather difficult. One solution for this issue was to tie *caput* to *iugum* as firmly as possible. Therefore, this taxation system contributed to a massive loss of freedom of movement for the rural population. The urban population that did not possess land had no obligation to pay *annona,* and therefore was in a preferential position. Evidently, the weight of this tax affected predominantly peasants.

Each year, the government would establish the rate of tax per fiscal unit, and every 15 years, beginning in 312 CE, taxes were reassessed. This was the first system of tax collection that was uniquely effective for the times and that none of the empire's enemies could begin to match. After a total budget was calculated—itself an invention of huge consequence—the total amount of revenue to be provided by the principal tax, the land tax (*annona*), was apportioned downward, first province by province, then city district by city district within each province, and finally down to individual plots of land in proportion to the estimated value of their output. During the seventh century CE, the top-down apportionment of an overall imperial budget seems to have

ended, but the collection of the land tax assessed field by field continued in a bottom-up flow of revenue.

The Byzantine emperors, who saw themselves as descendants of Augustus, kept the tradition of the *annona*, and for them it also represented a source of power for the government. By using the system of the *annona*, the Byzantine government gained a form of control over the Byzantine citizens who relied on the deliveries. For this supply, large amounts of cereal were needed, requiring a reserve to be on hand at all time. To guarantee the *annona*, the emperors had grain preserved and stored in government-run granaries.

The new system made possible a comparatively universal procedure of levying supplies. However, it was not uniformly applied to all provinces in the empire. In some places, taxes were levied on the combined assessments on the land and its inhabitants (human and animal), while elsewhere—in Egypt, for example—payments were assessed only on land.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Taxes; *Individuals*: Diocletian; *Groups and Organizations*: *Curiales*

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Bureaucracy

The Byzantine Empire is acknowledged as a state that had a complex system of secular administration with a significant number of titles and state offices. Over the thousand years of the empire's existence, some titles were introduced and others annulled, and their prestige would often rise or fall. In the first period, the titles closely resembled those in the late Roman Empire, as the Byzantine Empire did not yet differ from Rome. Until the rise to the throne of Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), many of the titles were no longer in use. Equally, the rule of Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) brought drastic changes in many of the positions while at the same time introducing new ones. They remained the same from the rule of Alexius I (r. 1081–1118) until the fall of the empire in 1453. The Byzantine bureaucracy was the largest and the most complicated apparatus in the Middle Ages.

The Byzantine emperor stood as sole ruler, or *autokrator* in Greek, at the top of the pyramid. Beneath him, many court officials and functionaries worked hard to make

the administration of the Byzantine state run more efficiently. The vast bureaucracy encompassed a diverse range of titles, and they even differed more than aristocratic and military ones. In Constantinople and the empire itself, hundreds of bureaucrats were usually active at any time. The Byzantine bureaucratic system was entirely different from the Roman in several areas. The Byzantines obtained money from the monopolies and the 10 percent tariff on trade while the Roman Empire did not have such funds. The Byzantine bureaucracy possessed skillful diplomats, able to control their adversaries using tributes, bribes, and subsidies. The Roman Empire employed a basic administration without a professional civil service. The Byzantine officials received regular promotions. Moreover, career bureaucrats usually maintained their posts despite changes of imperial regime. Survival of the empire was in the hands of these figures.

Thirteen different departments of the state represented the core of the civil administration. The Byzantine government usually grouped all offices in *kritai*, or judicial officers, and s*ekretikoi*, or financial officers. The s*akellarios* was a supreme inspector whose duty was to supervise s*ekretikoi*, at least in formal terms. Financial officers, the s*ekretikoi*, were presided over by directors of departments known by the general name "logothete" (an accountant in Greek). Logothete was a secretary in the sizable bureaucratic system and one of the essential bureaucrats. The activities they performed depended on the specific position. The grand logothete or *Megas logothete* was the head of the logothetes, personally in charge of the legal system and treasury, two central departments for the functioning of the state.

The logothete group of posts was the largest one, and these offices existed within various departments. *Logothetes tou genikou*, for example, was a minister in charge of financial matters mainly related to taxes and accounting. *Logothetes tou stratiotikou* managed the payment and supplies of the army. The postal logothete, *logothetes tou dromou,* was a kind of politician, a key figure in each department. The domestic logothete—*logothetes ton oikeiakon*—was responsible for the security of Constantinople and the local economy, a position like a head of internal affairs. Formally, logothetes exerted some influence on the emperor, but over time they became honorary posts. In the later period, the grand logothete developed into the *mesazon* (middleman in Greek), whose office was that of a manager.

The Praetorian prefect was initially an old Roman office used for the army commander in the eastern and western parts of the empire. After Diocletian's (r. 284–305 CE) reforms, the functions of the prefect were numerous and related to different areas: administrative, financial, judicial, and even legislative. The title of praetorian prefect lost its importance and changed in the seventh century CE. The title evolved into the *domestikos*. The recommendation of the *domestikos* was necessary for the appointment of provincial governors, and they reported to him. Also, their dismissal depended on him, although it was subject to the emperor's approval. The *domestikos* had treasuries of his own, and the army payment and food supplies of the military forces were within his domain. He acted as a supreme judge of appeal. Whenever a case would be brought before his court, to appeal in the next instance to the emperor was not allowed. He was also authorized to promulgate praetorian edicts related to minor issues.

Protoasecretes, or first secretary, was an earlier title for the head of the chancery, which was responsible for keeping official government records. The *asecretes* was an assistant, and an additional assistant was the *chartoularios*, who took care of imperial documents. The *kastrinsios* was an administrator in the palace, the *mystikos* was a private secretary, and finally, the *eidikos* was a treasury official.

The long list of administrators continued. Among the most significant were the *prefect*, included in local governing as a lower official in Constantinople, and *quaestor*, who at the beginning served as both legal and financial official. The post of the latter lost its function with the establishment of the logothetes.

The office of *tribounos* was comparable to the Roman tribune; he supervised infrastructure and construction works in Constantinople. *Magister officiorum* (master of offices), *magister militum* (master or commanding general of the infantry), and *magister utriusque* (master or commanding general of both infantry and cavalry) were also titles used both in the early Roman and Byzantine empires. During the reign of Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) they became honorific positions, as did the *sacellarios*, whose job was to supervise the palace administrators. Another official was the *praetor*, formally an administrator of Constantinople responsible for taxes, but after the rule of Alexius I (r. 1081–1118), the praetor assumed the position of civil governor of a theme. Some minor posts, yet equally essential for the functioning of the empire, were the *kephale*

CHANCERY

The imperial chancery was an essential piece in the governance of the Byzantine Empire. Precisely one of the basic elements that explain the extraordinary longevity of Byzantium as a political entity was the high efficiency of its governmental bureaucracy, whose core was the imperial chancery. Most of the main acts and letters signed by the emperor, addressed either to the whole empire or only to individuals, were drafted in the imperial chancery and received a sign of authenticity.

The Byzantine imperial chancery was first organized by Constantine the Great (306–337 CE). It was formed by a large number of officials (*notarioi*, or *grammatikoi*) organized in several departments (*scrinia*, or *sekreta*) under the direction of a high official named by the emperor (initially, the *magister officiorum*). The chancery was reorganized several times along the way to maintain its efficiency under changing circumstances, especially during wars. From the eight century onward, the chancery was directed by a high official called *protoasekretis*, who was assisted by many upper imperial *notarioi* (hence the name of *asekretis*). After the 12th century, the *protoasekretis* was substituted by the *logothetes tou dromou*, especially in matters connected with the international relations, and afterward by the *megas logothetes*, a kind of prime minister in the time of the Angelos dynasty and the Palaiologoi. The real chancellor was, however, the so-called *mesazon* (the "intermediary" between the emperor and the others).

In a time in which the different Western proto-states hardly had a rudimentary organization, the Byzantine Empire was able to keep in operation a sophisticated bureaucratic organism that represented a kind of rational way of governance, which, despite its rigidity and cumbersome procedures, could conserve a kind of social life based on the rule of law.

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(head in Greek), the civil governor of a Byzantine town; *horeiarios*, a person in charge of food distribution from the state granaries; and *dragoman*, a Turkish title applicable to interpreters and ambassadors.

The *protoasecretes*, logothetes, prefect, praetor, quaestor, magister, and *sacellarios*, among others, were all members of the Senate, until the time after Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE). After that period, they ceased to function in that capacity.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Master of Offices; Senate; *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Taxes; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Diocletian; Heraclius

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Clergy

In the Byzantine Empire, the clergy were divided into two main groups. The more senior of these groups included the three main orders of priests, bishops, and deacons. Only priests and bishops could celebrate the liturgy, while deacons assisted them at Mass and other church functions. There also existed two minor orders of subdeacons and readers. Subdeacons helped deacons and readers read out passages from the Bible during Mass. Byzantine canon law specified certain requirements for each of these orders of clergy. All the clergy had to be men, except for deacons. Female deacons or deaconesses, who had to be unmarried or widowed women, assisted at the baptism of women. The office of deaconess fell out of use over the course of the Middle Ages.

The highest order of clergy in the Byzantine Church was that of the bishop. Only bishops could be selected for the leadership positions of the church, such as archbishop, metropolitan and, most important, patriarch. A man could not be made a bishop before he became 30 years old. Bishops were not allowed to be married. In the first few centuries of Christianity, bishops gradually became the leaders of Christian communities. Church councils, particularly the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE), as well as imperial legislation, especially that of the emperor Justinian, made the bishop the most important church official within his area of ecclesiastical jurisdiction (diocese or see). Generally, the bishop was responsible for all the churches, monasteries, and charitable institutions (like hospitals or poorhouses) in his see. Within his diocese, he ordained the clergy and had to approve the election of an abbot of a monastery. In the first centuries of the Byzantine Empire, the bishop was supported by the voluntary donations of his flock. By the 11th century, he received an annual tax, the *kanonikon*, levied on the laypersons, clergy, and monasteries in his see.

Bishop Ecclesius (r. 526–547 CE), from the apse mosaic in the Church of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy. Ecclesius was responsible for initiating the construction of the Church of San Vitale, which is perhaps best known for its magnificent mosaics featuring Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) and his empress Theodora surrounded by their secular and spiritual advisors. (Antonio Ribeiro/Dreamstime.com)

Like a bishop, a priest could not be ordained before the age of 30. An important difference between priests in Byzantium and in the medieval West was the idea of clerical celibacy—that is, priests staying unmarried. Beginning in the 11th century in the Roman Catholic Church, a movement—the Gregorian Reform—tried to, among other things, end clerical marriage, which it eventually succeeded in doing. In the Byzantine Church, however, priests were always allowed to marry, if they were married before becoming ordained. Priests therefore often had wives and children. Married priests could not, however, become bishops.

Priests had a more difficult time than bishops finding funds to support them. While the bishop was supposed to support the priests in his see, it appears there usually wasn't enough money for this purpose. The most secure and well-paid positions for priests were in Constantinople, or in churches and monasteries founded by private persons. There were different ways for priests to obtain money to support themselves and their families. Though their flocks provided some support, there is lots of evidence that priests had regular jobs, like being farmers or craftsmen. Priests also charged fees for performing religious ceremonies, like baptisms and weddings. Some priests also owned their churches and ran them like family businesses, so that their children inherited them and often served as priests, deacons, or readers in them as well.

One important feature of the clergy in Byzantium was the status of monks. Being tonsured as a monk did not mean that a monk could act as a priest and conduct church services. In fact, it seems that many Byzantine monks were not ordained. Some of the most prominent Byzantine monastic leaders, such as Nikon of the Black Mountain (11th century), never became priests. Monks who did receive ordination were called "priest-monks" (*hieromonachoi*).

"NIKON OF THE BLACK MOUNTAIN"

The monastic reformer and canonist Nikon of the Black Mountain (ca. 1025–ca. 1100) is an excellent example of the considerable influence that monks, even when not ordained, could have on the state church. A native of a suburb of Constantinople who became a monk in a monastery outside Antioch, Nikon—after refusing ordination and various assignments—was given by the patriarch of Antioch the office of the "ministry of instruction" (*diakonia tou didaskaleiou*). In this capacity, he was tasked with answering questions of liturgical and monastic practice. His writings are of great interest because Antioch was a border region where the Greek-speaking Orthodox population was a minority. Nikon himself witnessed the fall of Antioch to the Seljuk Turks and the First Crusade.

Zachary Chitwood

The clergy in the Byzantine Empire did not attain the same level of secular power as in other Christian traditions. Bishops did not rule their own territories or lead armies, as they did in the Medieval West and the Caucasus.

The leader of the Byzantine Church was the patriarch of Constantinople. His role was similar in some ways to that of the pope for the Catholic Church in the West, but the patriarch of Constantinople never approached the degree of secular power that his Western colleague exercised. Indeed, during the medieval period there were five patriarchs, namely in Constantinople, Rome (the pope), Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Some church thinkers were supporters of a "pentarchy," a system of leadership of the Christian world in which each patriarch had an equal say. In practice, after the Muslim conquests of the seventh century, the patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome were far more influential and powerful than the other three eastern patriarchs.

The patriarch of Constantinople was not only the head of the Byzantine Church, but he could also exercise authority outside his area of jurisdiction in the capital city. Thus, from the ninth century onward, many monasteries outside Constantinople—for instance, on Mount Athos—were under the authority of the patriarch instead of the local bishop. Such monasteries were called "stauropegial" because the patriarch officially put them under his power by erecting a cross (*stauropegion*) in them. The patriarch of Constantinople and his sitting council or synod also acted as a court for many cases not only from the capital but also from around the Orthodox world. We know a great deal about this activity because the patriarchal register for this court survives for much of the 14th and part of the 15th century.

The role of the official church and the clergy changed after the end of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. The church and its officials became in the period of Ottoman rule (*Tourkokratia*) one of the main vehicles for the preservation of Hellenic culture and learning. The patriarch of Constantinople became the official representative of the Ottoman Empire's Orthodox community to the sultan, and he oversaw the collection of taxes from them on the sultan's behalf.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; Eastern Orthodox Church; Ecumenical Church Councils; Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Taxes; Usury; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; *Key Places*: Antioch; Mount Athos (Greece); *Primary Documents*: Document 3; Document 5; Document 6; Document 13

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Corruption

Complaints of corruption directed against officeholders in both the church and state administration are attested throughout Byzantine history. Many of these complaints, which detail bribery and the abuse of office for personal gain, would qualify as corruption according to most modern definitions. However, it is important to emphasize that almost all civil and ecclesiastical officials expected to profit from their offices to at least some degree. This is because many services of the state and church were not free, but rather provided in exchange for fees.

Using the legal system, for instance, cost money. Having a testament certified, suing someone, and other legal actions required the payments of fees, which in Latin were called *sportulae*, in Greek *ektagiatika*, to legal officials and their subordinates. Imperial legislation alternated between condemning the collection of legal fees and regulating them. Certain judges, such as the professional judges of the capital, the so-called "city judges" (*politikoi dikastai*), were forbidden from collecting legal fees, while other legal officials were not. In a similar manner, priests and bishops received fees for performing religious services, such as ordinations, marriages, and baptisms. Bribery was thus the collection of fees by officeholders beyond what the law allowed or what was viewed as socially acceptable. Yet the collection of fees itself was not usually viewed as a corrupt act.

Likewise, favoring one's clients, friends, and relatives was not in and of itself viewed as a form of corruption. Patronage of this sort occurred at all levels of Byzantine society. To an even greater extent than bribery, this type of favoritism was viewed as socially acceptable. In fact, it was cruel not to support friends and family with the powers of one's office.

Both state and church offices could be purchased, though the latter (simony) was more controversial than the former. The purchase of an office was in a certain sense an

"CITY JUDGES"

The "city judges" (*politikoi dikastai*) were elite civil judges of the imperial capital during the middle Byzantine period. They included the judges of the Hippodrome and Velum, and by the time of their appointment they normally had significant experience as provincial judges. The emperor assigned these judges intractable cases from other courts, usually from the provinces. These judges of the capital were held to a higher standard of legal knowledge and character than their provincial colleagues. They were forbidden from accepting legal fees for their judgments, and the 11th-century aristocrat Kekaumenos warned provincial judges that practicing bribery would attract the attention and wrath of these "city judges."

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investment, because the officeholder acquired a fixed annual income (or the ability to profit by other means from the office) in exchange for a lump sum.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Judge, Justice; Law; Offices; Usury

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Dignities

The granting of a dignity or title (*axia dia brabeion*, "honor by insignia") by the imperial government established a hierarchy of officers and individuals within late Roman and Byzantine society. Titles were granted to an individual for life—the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (899 CE) notes that they "have permanency—and they were not hereditary."

Dignities could be accumulated, as is clear from lead seals. On seals, especially from the 8th to 11th century, an individual's dignity or dignities appear immediately after his or her first name; this becomes less predictable as individuals increasingly used metrical inscriptions, which required words to be ordered to fit meter. In addition to seals, most other sources provide evidence for individual ranks as well as the general system of dignities; when an individual is named, he is often identified by

both rank and office. Women carry the same rank and office as their husbands, using the feminine Greek form.

In late antiquity, there were three ranks that afforded individuals membership in the Senate: *clarissimus*, *spectabilis*, and *illustris*. By the time of Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE), only men holding the rank of *illustris* were members of the Senate in Constantinople, and additional titles—*magnificus*, *gloriosus*, *gloriosissimus*, and *magnificus*—were established to distinguish further the highest dignitaries, who were also the most important officers.

Middle Byzantine dignities were often drawn from Roman and late antique offices. These included *magistros* (from *magister officiorum*, master of offices), *hypatos* (Greek translation of *consul*), and *spatharios* (originally an imperial bodyguard, which became an honorary dignity). All dignitaries holding the rank of *protospatharios* and higher were considered members of the Senate. Ranking in the lists of precedence from the 9th and 10th centuries are according to title, although the place of an individual within a class of dignitaries is determined by the office he holds; dignitaries without offices are placed at the end of each class.

During this period, some titles were reserved for eunuchs, namely *nipsistarios*, *koubikoularios*, *spatharokoubikoularios*, *ostiarios*, *primikerios*, and *praipositos*, and they shared the ranks of *protospatharios* and *patrikios* with noneunuchs.

The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos preserves instructions for the ceremony at which new dignitaries are invested with the insignia of their rank. For example, at the investiture of a *spatharios*, he receives a gold-and-white metal sword; a *protospatharios* receives a gold collar decorated with precious stones.

The highest titles were granted solely by the emperor, but many of the others were available for purchase. Individuals literally bought into the imperial system with a nonrefundable payment. In return, they received an annual salary (*roga*) for the rest of their lives. This payment has been calculated at between 2.31 and 3.47 percent of the capital, which was below the rate of inflation, although this does not consider supplementary payments made by the emperor as well as other dignitaries upon their investment with a title. *Roga* payments were furthermore at the discretion of the emperor, who might choose to increase, decrease, or skip a payment entirely.

The granting of high titles was one tool for diplomacy with foreign powers. For example, Constantine Porphyrogennetos's mid-10th-century *De Administrando Imperio* includes information about dispatching imperial agents to princes and elites in Taron and Iberia, on Byzantium's eastern frontier; they came with letters from the emperor, cash, and titles such as *patrikios, magistros*, and *protospatharios*. The granting of titles implicated foreign powers in an imperial system that not only ranked them against other dignitaries but also expressed their closeness to the emperor.

The accumulation of dignities that was prompted by the currency devaluation in the second half of the 11th century led to a transformation of the imperial hierarchy under Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118). The new system was founded on the rank of *sebastos* (literally, "venerable"), and dignities were accorded to members of the imperial family, by blood or marriage, and to close associates. Some titles were abolished, such as *patrikios* and *magistros*, while others were retained, such as *nobelissimos* and

kouropalates. This shift in title reflected a shift in the court administration of the empire, with members of the extended imperial family filling many of the high offices and the increasing importance of the imperial household in the administration of the empire. On lead seals, title—as an expression of the individual's relationship to the emperor—is of primary importance; offices often are not even included, even for some of the most important people. Dignities based on *sebastos* became ever more elaborate in a second period of title inflation.

By the 14th century, there was another transformation in titles, one that reflected the contraction of the empire and the court. The treatise by pseudo-Kodinos includes only a single hierarchy but draws a distinction between the most important as those holding a title (*axioma*) and those farther down the list, *archons* who hold an office (*offikion*). The use of dignifying epithets (e.g., *pansebastos sebastos*) in addition to ranked titles, recalling the middle Byzantine combination of title and office, seemed to have continued into the mid-14th century, after which the simplified ranking predominates.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *De Administrando Imperio* (Constantine VII); Diplomacy; *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; *Nobelissimos*; *Patrikios*, *Sebastos/Sebaste*; Senate; *Organization and Administration*: Hierarchy; Offices; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Eunuchs

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Environment

As understood in Byzantium, the biblical record firmly established the dominion of humankind over the natural world. Humanity was entrusted with control over the natural world but was required to work to transform wilderness into productive use. This reality was set in contrast to the biblical paradise in which humanity lived before its fall from grace and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In early Byzantine sermons, this primal human environment, the Garden of Eden, was depicted as a tranquil and "sweet smelling" ecosystem, an idyllic environment that was paired with an ideal climate.

Inspired by this original Garden of Eden, Byzantine culture maintained a longstanding interest in gardens, which represented human-controlled, ideal aspects of the natural world, offering visually appealing arrangements and pleasant aromas. Byzantine culture also demonstrated an appreciation for natural landscapes, notably mountains, rivers, and trees. One reason for such interest in natural environments was for their potential use in contemplative activity and their utility for spiritual progress. It was not the environment that mattered, per se, but what it offered for spiritual development. This is particularly notable in monasteries, which were both places of prayer and sites of gardens, orchards, and vineyards. On the other hand, some monastic establishments were said to have been selected precisely because they were not fertile and bountiful locations. These were set in barren wilderness that had to be transformed only after much spiritual and physical struggle, yet they still produced. Even Byzantine monastic hermits tended gardens, raising vegetables that they offered to guests who regularly sought them out for spiritual advice.

Cities, preeminently Constantinople, the "Queen of Cities," were the primary locus of culture and power, and emperors regularly placed gardens near public buildings and elites followed suit in their own constructions. Such gardens reflected the original garden and demonstrated evidence of human control over the natural world. Emperors also created game parks for their own hunting pleasure, stocked with animals of their liking.

Gardens were reminders for the original human environment, they were places of contemplation, and they were also microcosms of the human project on its grandest scale: the transformation of land into productive use for civilization. In Byzantium, land was power, and its value was based on its productive potential. This was the fundamental basis of wealth in the empire and the primary investment of the elites. According to the 10th-century horticultural manual *Geoponika*, agriculture, along with the army and clergy, was a foundation of Byzantine power. Agriculture made human domination over the natural world evident, and it transformed wild land for the service of humanity.

Byzantine cities may have been the center of culture and power, but it was the countryside beyond, where the bulk of the empire's population resided, that provided the subsistence that made that culture and power possible. The geographical environment of the Byzantine Empire varied widely from Egypt, the Levant, and North Africa to the Mediterranean and Black Sea coastline to the rugged Balkans,

Anatolian plateau, and Caucasus region beyond. After the Germanic and Arab invasions from the 5th to 7th centuries, which deprived the empire of its western and southern territories, Byzantium in its middle and late periods (7th to 15th century) was largely confined to the Balkans and Anatolia. These areas were most heavily populated on the coastal regions, which accounts, in part, for the empire's productivity in the 11th and 12th centuries, even after the emergence of the Seljuq Turks in the east. The Byzantines lost the Anatolian plateau after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 but managed to secure their hold on the wealthy, productive, and populous coastal areas.

The geographical context of the empire largely determined crop production. Grain (wheat and barley) was grown wherever it could be cultivated. Vegetables were cultivated extensively (various leafy greens, peas, beans, chickpeas, onions, beets, squash, leeks, carrots, garlic, cucumbers) as were fruits, where the climate allowed (apples, pears, peaches, pears, figs, mulberries, cherries, melons), and, of course, grapes and olives, for the empire's wine and olive oil consumption. Agricultural reality shaped the calendar of work with planting in the fall and harvesting in early summer. This was the food that fueled the empire, which also meant that the empire's well-being was intimately connected to climate, which had a major impact on Byzantine industry.

Historians have traditionally resisted attributing determinative value to environmental factors in shaping human history, lest human agency be (as the evidence would suggest) reduced. This has significantly changed in recent years as historians have increasingly studied environmental history in the ancient and medieval world. For example, the study of ancient climatic records has revealed relatively warm and humid conditions during the *Pax Romana* (a period of relative peace started by the first Roman emperor, Augustus), which were conducive to agricultural production and that came to an end in the late 2nd century CE, coinciding with the emergence of a politically turbulent period and continuing into the "crisis" of the 3rd century. In the period between 300 and 560 CE, 12 droughts and 18 famines are recorded during a drier climatic phase in Anatolia. But a wetter phase followed, lasting into the 8th century, when no droughts and only 2 famines are found in the historical record. The climate changed over the next three centuries, with increasing records of droughts and famines, although not all regions in the empire experienced the same weather conditions. Such examples in the historical record include the brutally cold winter of 927–928 CE, which killed people and crops and compelled the imperial government of Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE) to build shelters and distribute support for those in need in the capital. This weather extreme also forced many farmers to sell their land to Byzantine elites, setting in motion a process that would lead to imperial land legislation in the 10th century to preserve land for "the poor" against "the powerful." In addition to responding to climate challenges, Byzantine domestic or foreign policy could even result in disastrous environmental impact, as was the case in the 14th-century recruitment of the Catalan Company, whose disruption of Byzantine agricultural production had a more deleterious affect than the depredation of the Turks themselves.

Still, in the end, the goal for the emperor and his Orthodox subjects was a return to paradise and the rewards of eternal life in the environment of heaven, rather than the earthly realm.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; Law; Taxes; *Individuals*: Lecapenus, Romanus I; *Key Events*: Manzikert, Battle of

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Feudalism

Feudalism refers to the social, economic, and political relations between groups in medieval Western Europe. The term is quite broad and there was, in fact, great variation across Latin Europe of the Middle Ages. In the absence of any state authority or central government, the feudal system provided a semblance of order by tying lords and vassals and peasants and landlords by oaths and customs. Peasants owed labor and food to their landlords in return for protection, and they also provided for the clergy, who delivered sacred protection. The medium of exchange between lords and vassals was land. The vassal received land (*feudum* in Latin) for which he owed military service to the lord. The *feudum* would become hereditary as a fief, with the vassal's descendants owing the same obligation to the lord. The land was granted along with the peasant labor, which was permanently bound to it. Thus, medieval society has been categorized into three groups: those who fight (kings, knights), those who pray (the clergy), and those who work (the peasants). This was a society in which 95 percent of the population served 5 percent of elites, whether clergy or laypeople (kings, knights), with the elites maintaining control of military, judicial, and economic power.

The Byzantine Empire, on the other hand, had a state apparatus that exercised actual power and maintained paramount authority over all subjects in its territory. This authority could not be *legally* subverted. Whereas Western Europe witnessed landed elites controlling military power and dominating peasant communities, which owed elites revenue and labor, the Byzantine state held the reigns of military power and protected free peasants from such encroachment by "the powerful," as the landed elites were known in the middle Byzantine period. In the 10th century, Byzantine emperors became aware that leading families, with their large estates and vast resources, had begun to encroach on and absorb lands of free peasants. The state was quick to respond.

Emperors were concerned to protect peasant lands for many reasons. The Byzantine state wanted to ensure its security of tax revenue, since the loss of peasant land to influential aristocrats, who held various privileges and protections through their rank and offices, would reduce taxation coming to the treasury. This loss would further encumber other peasants in the village community, since taxation was assessed collectively and the burden of underpaid taxation shifted to remaining peasants in the village. In addition, much land was provided by the state to peasants for partial compensation for military service. Loss of such land could impact Byzantine provincial army units. Since the landed elites threatened to undermine state power, the emperors began to issue legislation to keep this phenomenon in check.

Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE) was the first emperor to issue laws protecting free peasants from "the powerful." Such legislation is an example of Byzantine central state authority that could protect free village communities against the encroachment of formidable landed elites, in stark contrast with the feudal society of the West, where such authority did not exist. The apogee of this protection was during the reign of Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE), who fought two civil wars against powerful landed families, achieving the triumph, if temporary, of emperor over aristocratic families who challenged imperial authority. In 1002, Basil II shifted the burden of defaulted tax payments from peasants to the landed magnates who lived nearby. Basil shifted the burden of taxation from the poor to the rich, a dramatic example of Byzantine state protection of free peasants and rejection of feudal principles.

This manuscript image from an 11th-century psalter (book of psalms) depicts Emperor Basil II in military dress, flanked by military saints, with a spear and crown (symbolizing military and imperial power, respectively) entrusted to him by angels. He stands triumphant over his defeated, subservient foes. (Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

After Basil II, the political will to continue this vigilance gave out. Emperor Romanus Argyrus (r. 1028–1034) yielded to the pressure of the landed magnates and abolished Basil II's law as soon as he came to the throne. In the view of George Ostrogorsky, one of the formative scholars of Byzantium, the failure to challenge landed interests after Basil II undermined central authority, reduced the state's access to resources, and weakened its ability to defend the empire. And so,

feudal tendencies became entrenched in the 11th century and thus began Byzantine decline. Other scholars argue that the great landed families that came to dominate the empire (and the peasant communities therein) were not the cause of the empire's decline, arguing that these estates were beneficial and noting that Byzantine economy and culture thrived in the 12th century. No small part of the problem, they propose, was caused by the state's attempt to limit such expansion, which was helping the overall economy.

Through an alliance of landed aristocratic families, Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) secured the throne, and his Comeni Dynasty (1081–1182) initiated major changes in Byzantine government, including an increase of feudal tendencies in Byzantium. These emperors began to grant *pronoia*, which provided the holder with the revenue of an area in return for service (generally military) to the state. The *pronoia* holder collected the revenue *directly* and had rights to peasant labor. For Ostrogorsky, this was equivalent to a *feudum*, though other scholars counter that the Byzantine state maintained its ownership of the *pronoia* as well as its judicial oversight.

Feudal practices greatly expanded after the conquest of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire by the Western armies of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The Crusaders did not maintain the integrity of a single empire as they had conquered it but carved it into feudal pieces and ruled each portion in accordance with the Western feudal system. After the reconquest of Constantinople in 1261 and the restoration of the Byzantine Empire by Michael Palaeologus (r. 1259–1282), feudal practices had become entrenched and accelerated during his Palaeologian Dynasty (1259–1453). Pronoia grants became hereditary and a new reduction of state power appeared: the appanage. An appanage was a grant of a large area of the empire to a member of the imperial family, who ruled it independently with its own court, army, and administration. The Byzantine Empire was tied together by relatives ruling pieces independently, without any central oversight or control of the empire. In the 15th century, Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II conquered one piece at a time, one after the other, absorbing Constantinople and the Byzantine appanages into the Ottoman Empire.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; Fiscal System; Taxes; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Lecapenus, Romanus I; *Groups and Organizations*: *Dynatoi*; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Fourth Crusade

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Fiscal System

The Byzantine Empire, unlike many Western European political units of this period, had a powerful centralized state, and this was strongly reflected in the economic realm. To stabilize its economy, the state provided an integrating framework through the fiscal system, monetary mechanism, and institutions that guided and controlled economic relations. For economic expansion and growth, the role of the fiscal system was significant, representing a driving force until the 11th century.

The fiscal authorities, known as the sacred largesse in the early period, controlled the central treasury and minted coins, and they reported directly to the emperor. The revenues were collected from taxes, mainly levied on land, state-owned mines, and customs duties. The state retained exclusive rights over taxation, which was the major source of the state income. It was the part of added value that did not remain with the producers. Moreover, it distributed its revenues in salaries, for civil and military officials, and invested in military and defense campaigns as well as in infrastructural and public works. This money reached various economic layers and strata, and eventually some part reached the taxpayer, or producer. Obviously, the government concentrated on a surplus of wealth but also made the circulation of the money compulsory.

In the early period, Byzantium adopted the taxation system from late antiquity, with certain adjustments according to given circumstances. The fiscal system of the middle Byzantine period was developed throughout centuries, starting with Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) and undergoing certain reforms during the reign of the Isaurians (717–797 CE) and Emperor Nicephorus I (r. 802–811 CE). It was solid in the 9th century but began to change slowly in the 10th century, and these changes became quite evident in the 11th century. In the period of its highest efficiency, the system was created to fill in the state treasury with as much gold as possible but not to burden peasants without limits.

There were many different types of taxes, from property and inheritance taxes, taxes on domestic animals, or taxes on administration of the fiscal system, to rather peculiar ones, such as treasure-hunting taxes and taxes on those who suddenly became rich. The base tax, and the most important one, was the land tax, *annona*, imposed on all owners of land. Moreover, payment of the tax was itself proof of the ownership. Since the age of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE), trades and artisans were obliged to pay high taxes in gold, known as *auri lustralis collatio*.

The reforms of Anastasius I (r. 491–518 CE) enabled prosperity and military success in the following decades. Firstly, the organ responsible for tax collecting was no longer the *curiales* or members of the city council, but the praetorian prefect. Moreover, trade and industry were probably stimulated by the termination of the *chrysargyron* (previously known as *auri lustralis collatio*), a tax in gold paid by the urban classes. To compensate partial loss to the state, the rural classes were forced to pay the land tax, *annona*, in money rather than in kind. During much of this period, the state insisted on payment of taxes in cash, more specifically, in gold.

There were certain categories that enjoyed a tax exemption. The most important were peasant households that were responsible for military service. Soldiers from peasants' families were the main force in expansion and survival of the Byzantine Empire. The part of their land that was considered necessary for discharge of their military duties was inalienable, and they were relieved from secondary taxes and corvées. This system of exemption existed since the seventh century.

While Empress Irene canceled taxes in the urban areas and decreased customs, because of growing crisis in the economy, Emperor Nicephorus I (r. 802–811 CE) had to discontinue previously introduced tax exemptions, revise lists of taxpayers, and increase tax rates. A distinctive feature of Byzantium was a hearth tax, *kapnikon*, which was paid in imperial provinces by households without land, while those with land paid combined hearths and land tax. In the sources from the period of Nicephorus I's rule its reintroduction was defined, which confirms its existence in the previous periods. Furthermore, this tax was imposed on peasants in church and monastery properties.

Byzantine Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE) enforced *allelengyon* on the wealthiest landowners to pay for uncultivated or abandoned land. This system of collective responsibility for the payment of outstanding taxes starting from this period was transferred from the village community to the nearest large landowner, whether lay or ecclesiastical. *Allelengyon* provided a constant and rather high income to the treasury.

The fiscal machine that the Byzantines inherited had a decisive virtue: tax collection was incredibly efficient, and often cruel imperial tax collectors were able to generate extraordinary amounts of money for the imperial treasuries. From the strategic point of view, the most important consequence of regular taxation was a relatively stable military system and regular military service. While most of their enemies had to rely on tribal levies, volunteer warriors, freebooters, or forced peasants, and therefore experienced extreme difficulties in providing their supplies, the Byzantines could keep salaried imperial soldiers and sailors on duty year-round, although they also had part-time reservists subject to recall.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: *Annona*; Bureaucracy; Taxes; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Heraclius; Irene; *Groups and Organizations*: *Curiales*

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Guilds

In the Roman Empire, guilds or corporations (*collegia* or *corpora*) were above all a form of association that brought individuals together into a recognized entity to defend its members' interest, ensure the performance of funerary ceremonies, promote religious activities, help the poor, or just encourage the social intercourse under the principle of solidarity among its members. In the economic sphere, this organization was more specifically intended to restrain competition in a precise sector of activity, to represent the profession before the public authorities, and, in most of cases, to transmit technical knowledge to the new generations through apprenticeship. At the beginning of the third century, guilds became the instruments of economic planning in the hands of the state, which tried to make the membership of the workers to their corporation obligatory for life and by heredity and to require that the artisans remain in their industry and supply some portion of their production to the state, typically at a lower price than normal. Likewise, they were used to exercise disciplinary power over their misbehaving members (Cod. Iust. 12.1.6, 4.63.3, 11.8.16). The degree of public requirements differed among different guilds, so that those *collegia* that dealt with the supply of Rome and other major cities (e.g., bakers, butchers, grain traders, shipmasters, etc.) were subject to a stricter regulation and government control. Eventually, this compulsory system failed completely.

The Byzantine Empire substantially inherited this late Roman guild organization (*systemata* or *somateia*), and this was to continue with light divergences till the end of the empire (with a gap in the sources between the first half of 7th century and the beginning of the 10th century). According to some interpretations, Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) reduced the level of coercion over the guilds. There were notwithstanding a big amount of regulatory provisions, such us the prohibition for guild members to partake concurrently in more than a guild, or the prohibition for them to supply inputs and finished goods to nonguild members, to buy imported inputs on behalf of influential or wealthy persons, to act as procurement agents for members of unauthorized guilds, to barter or purchase goods they were not allowed to handle, to sell such inputs unprocessed, etc. All these rules tended to prevent the growth of commercial manufacturing and trade activities outside the guild system.

In the 10th century, the guilds were under supervision of the prefect of the city (*eparchos tou poleos*). This office, inspired by Rome's, was created in 359 CE to administer the eastern capital. He was the highest authority in the city after the emperor and, among other functions, was responsible for the security of the capital. Consequently, he had to control the commercial and industrial activity inside its walls. In his staff were a number of officials, such as the *symponos* (first counselor of the prefecture and deputy of the eparch), the *logothethes tou praitoriou* (assisted the eparch in police and judicial matters), *geitoniarchai* (district magistrates of the city), *parathalassites* (judge in charge of the seashore and the port of Constantinople, especially of the import of goods and the payment of tolls), *exarchai* and *prostatai* (leaders of the guilds), *boullotai*

(inspectors able to enter the workshops to control the quality of the products and certify them).

Functions of the eparch and obligations of the guilds are described in the *Book of the Eparch*, a collection of legal provisions perhaps promulgated by Leo VI in 911–912 CE. The only complete manuscript copy that has survived up to us is probably just a draft, having the appearance of a legislative text but without its coherence, and it could have had some revisions too. It does not deal with all the guilds in general but only some of them related to trades peculiar to Constantinople, such as those concerning juridical practices (notaries); banking (money changers); the manufacture, sale, and export of high-value goods (goldsmith, silk); trades more suspected of fraud (chandlers, soap makers); trades with imperial commission (leatherworking); and above all those involved in the provisioning of the capital and the urban population. Its rules therefore cannot be extended to all sectors of economic activity in the Byzantine Empire, not even in the city, because many of the artisanal activities that were organized as guilds are not mentioned, or just superficially.

Taking this into account, according to its provisions the privileged guilds were led by their elder members and admission to the guild of external individuals depended on them (only for notaries there was a state verification of aspirants' qualification to membership, with a limitation to 24 members), as well as the expulsion of the members, which was considered a kind of punishment. Under the supreme control of the eparch (or imperial officials in the provinces), guilds regulated the quality and volume of production, prices of goods, salary of the artisans, and acquisition of wares from outside merchants. There was no difference of status among the guilds, but there were, nonetheless, great disparities in officials, terms of admission, or fees to be paid. They are presented as communities with some features like those of confraternities, since they managed funds for the performance of certain corvées, as well as celebrations, processions, and ceremonies on occasion of the feast of a patron saint.

Apparently Byzantine guilds continued to exist up to the end of the empire, but their system seems to be less rigid from the 12th century onward, probably because of the pressure of the "feudalizing" forces prone to grant control of artisanal industries to the landed aristocracy, whereas the "free trade" in the city facilitated the invasion of the market by Italian merchants.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Notarius*; *Organization and Administration*: *Annona*; Feudalism; Judge, Justice; Market; Offices; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: *Collegia*; Professional Associations

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Hierarchy

Byzantine sources present society as strictly hierarchical, with individuals ranked according to their title and office, and, by extension, their relationship to the emperor. Sources for hierarchy are, most important, lists of precedence and lead seals. Other documents, including legal, military, and political and philosophical treatises, as well as histories and chronicles, provide more data.

The Byzantine court was understood to reflect the heavenly court, with the emperor as God or Christ, whose regent he is on earth. The late 11th-century writer Katakalon Kekaumenos writes in his *Strategicon* that if you serve the ruler, you should not serve him as a mere man, but as if he were God. The emperor was the apex of the social and administrative hierarchy, which he shaped passively, through confirmation of the status quo in the investment of new dignitaries, or actively, in the promotion of officers or the reconfiguration of the order of precedence.

The hierarchy is most clearly expressed in the various lists of precedence or of officers, which exist from the 4th to the 14th century. Varying considerably in length and comprehensiveness, they reflect changes in administration and imperial territories. They further attest the existence of a hierarchically organized system of government, with departments, bureau heads, and subordinates listed in their appropriate positions.

Four lists of precedence (*tactica*) from the 9th and 10th centuries, in combination with lead seals, present a ranking based on an interplay of titles, or dignities, and offices. They reveal a regular system of central and provincial administration, including officers tasked with managing finance, justice, the church, the army and navy, and the functioning of the imperial palace.

Other sources, though, make clear that reality was not always clear-cut. The emperor ultimately had discretion in the appointment of officers and granting of titles, and his wishes could cut across official or departmental roles and responsibilities.

There is also a question as to how generally applicable these lists were. Philotheos, in his *Kletorologion* (899 CE), makes clear that he is composing his treatise to guide his successors. Comparing the earliest of these documents, the *Taktikon Uspensky* (early to mid-ninth century), with the latest, the *Taktikon Escorial* (971–975 CE), however, reveals the limits of this intention, as new territories came under Byzantine

IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

The emperor (*basileus* or *autokrator*) was the key figure in the Byzantine polity; he was seen by the subjects as not just a ruler and military leader but also as a charismatic figure with a cosmic function (*mimesis theou* = imitation of God). The Byzantine emperors were described as having, among other qualities, *philantropeia* (love of mankind), *eusebeia* (piety), and *sophrosyne* (temperance). His extraordinary position is reflected in practically every artistic, literary, political, and legal creation of Byzantine civilization. The essence of the state was co-substantial with his person. This explains that the Byzantine emperor was not only chief of the army and the civil administration, but also the first figure of the Orthodox Church (even above the patriarch of Constantinople), what is traditionally known as "Caesaropapism." This conception of the imperial figure did not actually come from Rome but rather from Hellenistic and oriental (Persian) representations. Notwithstanding, already the Roman *princeps* had steadily acquired providential aura, and at the end of the 13th century the imperial cult had even been introduced. Though being endowed with these semidivine attributes, the emperor was not deemed to be above the law but rather an *ennomos epistasia* (authority empowered by law).

The emperor and his family lived in the palace, outside the sight of his subjects. Life in the palace was ruled by a strict protocol, and the appearances of the emperor were organized according to a complicated ceremonial. The emperor was surrounded by a court of servants and counselors. For the government of the empire, he mainly relied on his private counsel (*sacred consistorium* or *theion synedrion*) and the highest officials (*logothetai*) and military chiefs, but very often the real government was entrusted to relatives or to private persons he had absolute confidence in.

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control and the relationship between officers in the military and provincial administration changed.

Ultimately, though, the middle Byzantine hierarchy was dependent upon elite investment in the imperial system. Officers gave their services to the state, and dignitaries literally invested by purchasing their titles. Although the emperor could theoretically intervene in the regular ordering expressed in these documents, and notwithstanding changes over a century and a half, the system up to the end of the 11th century was remarkably stable.

Hierarchy was on full display at court ceremonies. Participants of the same rank acted together, wore the same costume, and carried the same insignia. Carefully choreographed banquets provided individuals of different ranks access to the imperial table. Philotheos took pains to precisely locate ambassadors from foreign nations in his list: first those from Rome, then from the three eastern patriarchates—the Arabs, the Bulgarians, the Franks—and then everyone else.

Title and office continued under the Comnenians—albeit reformed—but the nature of the hierarchy was refocused on the imperial family. Rather than being defined through investment or service, one's place in the hierarchy was governed,

INSIGNIA

Byzantine court ranks were known as *axia dia brabeion*, titles by insignia. Insignia symbols given to titleholders became a sign of their new rank and could take many forms. Insignia could be clothes, such as the *fiblatorion*, a cloak fastened with a broach, or the *vestitor*, a white-and-gold robe secured with a red leather belt decorated with precious stones for the *magistrioi*. Jewelry was another possibility—for example, the crown without a cross worn by the Caesar or the torques given to the *spatharokandidatoi* and *kandidatoi*. Insignia might take the form of diplomas—for the *hypatoi* and *dishypatoi*, for example—or inscribed ivory tablets such as those awarded to the *patrikioi*. The final category of insignia were ceremonial versions of handheld items, such as a rod—gold for the *silentiarioi*, red for the *mandatores*—a decorated sword for the *spatharioi*, and a gold whip for the *stratores* referencing their origins as imperial grooms.

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above all, by one's relationship to the emperor through blood, marriage, or association. Lead seals over the course of the 12th century increasingly exclude offices in favor of statements about the individual's ties to the ruling family. Byzantium continued to be hierarchical, but the governing principle had shifted.

Both strands—the preeminence of the emperor and the centrality of familial ties—came to a head in late Byzantium. Lists of precedence from the 14th century, when emperors ruled over a much smaller territory and government than their middle Byzantine predecessors, reveal changes in the order of titles to promote individuals and to demote members of antagonistic factions at court.

Beyond the interplay of title and office, hierarchy can also be understood more loosely as the relationship of different elements of society. In this respect, Byzantium was significantly less rigidly hierarchical. Except for the emperor, one's status was always situational—an elite who dominated his region could call himself a slave (*doulos*) of the emperor. The categorical language of the 10th-century Macedonian land legislation regarding the "powerful" is in fact relative: no one, again excepting the emperor, is powerful in every situation.

The household (*oikos*) provided a language for the hierarchical organization of society more generally. The relationship of father to son, or brother to brother, appears at home—whether aristocratic or peasant—and in the monastery—where a new family is gained after leaving the old one behind. It also occurs in communications between rulers: the emperor habitually referred to the Bulgarian ruler as "son."

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; *Taktikon Uspensky*; *Organization and Administration*: Dignities; Law; Offices; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Family; Franks

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Institutes

The *Institutes* were a textbook of Roman law. The *Institutes*, along with the *Digest*, the *Codex Iustinianus*, and the *Novels*, constituted one of the four main parts of the legal reform project of the emperor Justinian. Scholars today often call these works collectively the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, the "Body of Civil Law," even though this designation was not used before the Early Modern period. Justinian gave the *Institutes* the force of law in his constitution "Imperatoriam," issued on November 21, 533 CE. Up to this point there had been many different textbooks of Roman law in circulation. Justinian wanted jurists and lawyers to use the same textbook, which is why he promulgated the *Institutes*. It was drawn up by two professors of law named Theophilos and Dorotheos. Many of the *Institutes* are derived from the textbook of Roman law, also called the *Institutes*, authored by the Roman legal scholar Gaius, who lived in the second century after Christ.

The *Institutes* were written almost entirely in Latin. In the sixth century, when the *Institutes* were compiled, this was not a problem for students of Roman law. Most of these students knew both Latin and Greek. But after the sixth century, fewer and

"EXHELLENISMOS"

The difficulty that Byzantine jurists from the seventh century on had in reading Latin legal texts like the *Institutes* also applied to legal texts written in Greek but with many Latin words, like Theophilos's *Paraphrase of the Institutes*. This problem of residual Latin eventually led, in the ninth century, to the process of translating Latin legal terms into Greek, which was termed *exhellenismos* or "Hellenizing." Through *exhellenismos*, Byzantine legal texts were slowly but steadily purged of Latin words over the following centuries. By the 12th century, Byzantine law had become practically Latinless.

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fewer people in the Byzantine Empire knew Latin. This meant that the *Institutes*, as well as other Roman legal texts, became very difficult to use. Very few Byzantine legal scholars after around 650 CE would have been able to read Latin at all.

For this reason, the *Institutes* were not read in the original over most of the Middle Ages. Instead, most law students used a Greek paraphrase of the *Institutes* written by Theophilus, the law professor mentioned above. Theophilus's *Paraphrase of the Institutes* is characterized by its lively classroom style. Even though it is written in Greek, around every 10th word of the *Institutes* is in Latin, still written in Roman letters. This means that someone reading the text still had to have a working knowledge of Latin, or at least have access to Greek-Latin legal dictionaries or lexicons, of which there were many. Still, reading the *Paraphrase of the Institutes* in Greek was much easier for a Byzantine student of law than reading the *Institutes* in Latin.

The *Paraphrase of the Institutes* was the closest thing to a standard introduction to law in the Byzantine Empire. Like the *Institutes*, it divides its discussion of the principles of Roman law into persons, things, and actions—actions (Latin *actiones*, Greek *agogai*) being the claim by which someone could sue. The influence of Theophilos's *Paraphrase of the Institutes* can be seen in almost all Byzantine legal texts. It is transmitted in its entirety in 14 legal manuscripts, which means it must have been one of the most popular legal texts.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Judge, Justice; Law; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Key Events: Corpus Iuris Civilis*

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Judge, Justice

Judges performed different functions in the capital and in the provinces. In a province, a judge was usually the highest-ranking civil official. He recruited and paid for a large staff of clerks (notaries) and other functionaries. At least for some periods of Byzantine history, particularly in the 10th and 11th centuries, judges moved with their staffs throughout the province and judged cases at different sites. These provincial judges also had fiscal responsibilities, like collecting secondary taxes.

These judges in the provinces were often not legal scholars. They were selected to their posts because of their connections at the imperial court. Furthermore, some provincial judges were more interested in making money than rendering justice. There are many anecdotes over the centuries of corrupt judges. The 11th-century aristocrat Kekaumenos, for instance, devoted many passages in his *Strategikon* to the dangers of provincial judges accepting bribes. Visions of the Byzantine afterlife occasionally include unjust judges suffering eternal punishment for their earthly misdeeds. Provincial judges and their staffs were paid legal fees for every case they judged. A considerable number of imperial constitutions attempted to regulate or even abolish the paying of these legal fees, but they seem to have been a constant feature of the Byzantine legal system.

In Constantinople, by contrast, there were at different periods in Byzantine history tribunals of professional judges. These colleges of the empire's best judges functioned in some ways like the Supreme Court of the United States today: the emperor assigned cases from lower courts to these tribunals and their verdicts helped establish legal norms of interpretation. This is especially evident for the judges of the Hippodrome and of the Velum (these names are likely derived from where the judges convened), two colleges of professional judges in Constantinople active in the middle Byzantine period. We know much about the activity of these judges because of the writings of the most famous Byzantine scholar of secular law in this period, Eustathios Rhomaios, who was like a modern chief justice.

Judges were not the only persons to render justice. Magistrates acted as judges within their own jurisdictions. Thus, the head of an imperial bureau might act as a judge for the estates and properties attached to his department. Likewise, a military governor might serve as a judge for the soldiers within his province. Since civil magistrates and military officials sometimes had no legal training whatsoever, assistants called *symponoi* were assigned to them to serve as judges when necessary. For the army, special judges accompanied Byzantine troops on campaign.

Churchmen were among the most important judges in Byzantine society. The emperor Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) granted bishops the power of hearing civil cases via the so-called *episcopalis audientia* ("episcopal audience"). Bishops had courts of their own, and the patriarch of Constantinople possessed a permanent sitting council or synod that also heard cases. Bishops' courts heard cases involving clergy, or when both parties in a dispute agreed to submit their case to the bishop's arbitration. Much of our best evidence for Byzantine jurisprudence comes from

ecclesiastical courts, such as that of the Demetrios Chomatenos, the archbishop of Ohrid, or from the register of the patriarchate of Constantinople. The importance of ecclesiastical courts, along with canon law, grew considerably in the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire. Both church and lay judges served as so-called "judges general" (*katholikai kritai*), who together represented the highest court in the empire during the Palaeologian Dynasty (1261–1453).

One important difference between judges in Byzantium and the medieval West is that in the Byzantine Empire powerful landowners were not able to render justice to peasants working their estates. Legitimate judges could be provided only by the state or the church. Nonetheless, certain parts of the Byzantine Empire had their own special jurisdictions. The best documented of these is Mount Athos, whose monks were in theory never supposed to use civil courts (even though in practice they often did). Instead, the governing council of abbots, the so-called *synaxis*, headed by a chief abbot or *protos*, was tasked with judging internal Athonite disputes. Numerous records of their activities as judges—for instance, in settling boundary disputes—have survived in the archives of the monasteries of Mount Athos.

There are enough instances from Byzantine literature of saints' biographies (hagiography) to suggest that persons other than magistrates or churchmen could also act as judges, albeit informally. Even if their verdicts were not official, cases resolved by saints and holy men were often considered just as valid, if not more so, than those judged by state or church officials. While saints were usually asked to act as judges in resolving what were local disputes, this was not always the case. Daniel the Stylite, a fifth-century saint who lived on a pillar outside Constantinople, is even reputed to have acted as a mediator between the Byzantine emperor Leo I (r. 457–474 CE) and Gubazes I, the king of Lazica (in what is now Georgia).

Occasionally, when earthly judges failed to deliver a clear or satisfactory verdict, divine arbiters were sought. Michael Psellus famously described in one of his hagiographical orations how a recurring miracle in a Constantinopolitan church was used to resolve an ownership dispute between a military governor and a monastery. Trial by ordeal was also practiced in Byzantium, with the first descriptions of this process appearing in the 13th century.

EUSTATHIOS RHOMAIOS

The Byzantine judge Eustathios Rhomaios (fl. ca. 975–ca. 1045) was the most prominent middle Byzantine jurist. Stemming from a family of judges, over his long career he steadily rose through the ranks of the judicial profession, even becoming the empire's most influential jurist. Even during his own lifetime, he was recognized as a judge of exceptional ability, and an adoring student around 1050 compiled a casebook, the so-called *Peira*, based on some 200 to 300 of Eustathios's decisions. Though the complete text survives in only one manuscript, it was shortly after Eustathios's death used as a legal textbook.

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The contemporary notion of judicial impartiality did not apply to Byzantine judges. While fair and honest judges were admired, judges were encouraged to draw on their personal inclinations toward those who came before them. If a judge were a friend with someone he was judging, it was deemed acceptable to grant him favorable treatment, if it did not involve bribery. Judges were heavily influenced by the precepts of Orthodox Christianity, which encouraged them to be lenient in their rulings.

One concept used by judges that became characteristic of Byzantine jurisprudence was *oikonomia*, which can be roughly translated as "dispensation." This term, which was adopted from Orthodox theology, allowed judges to bend rules to arrive at a satisfactory outcome. The strict letter of the law was thus often not followed.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Notarius*; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Clergy; Corruption; Fiscal System; Province; Taxes; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Key Places*: Hippodrome (Constantinople); Mount Athos (Greece)

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Law

There existed two main bodies of law in the Byzantine Empire: canon law and civil/secular law. Byzantine secular law was essentially Roman law. As such, it extended all the way back to the Twelve Tables, the first written set of laws composed in the Latin language. For most of Roman history, there was no "official" collection of secular law. Instead, the law consisted of decrees of the Senate and emperor, the decisions of high-ranking officials, and even the opinions of jurists. The first two standardized collections of laws in the Roman legal tradition, the *Codex Gregorianus* and the *Codex Hermogianus*, were private works.

Beginning in the fifth century CE with the *Theodosian Code* (*Codex Theodosianus*), the government attempted to produce official compilations of imperial law. Over the course of a decade (429–438 CE), the compilers of the Theodosian Code gathered what they considered laws that applied to the whole empire, *leges generales*, from the time of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) onward. The goal of the project, which was in fact never realized, was to create a standard code of Roman law, the

BASILIKA

The *Basilika* were a Hellenized version of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, which were promulgated as law on Christmas Day in 888 CE. The two emperors who conceptualized the project and then brought it to completion, Basil I and Leo VI, issued the *Basilika* as part of a broader program of legal reform known as the "Cleansing of the Ancient Laws," by which the Justinianic corpus of law was translated into Greek and in some rare cases reworked and updated. The main text of the work is divided thematically into 60 books. Byzantine legal scholars attached remarks of earlier Late Antique jurists to the text as marginal notes or scholia, as well as their own commentaries from the 11th and 12th centuries; these two sets of commentaries on the *Basilika* are commonly referred to as "old" and "new" scholia. It is in fact these scholia that are perhaps our best window into seeing how Byzantine jurists used standardized legal works like the *Basilika*.

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codex magisterium vitae, which would have consisted of imperial constitutions (the *Theodosian Code*) and the opinions of learned jurists.

It was the emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) who ultimately brought about the work envisioned by the compilers of the *Theodosian Code* and launched an unprecedented program of legal reform that would influence the rest of Byzantine history. Under the direction of the brilliant jurist Tribonian, a commission of legal scholars was ordered by Justinian to create standardized compilations of Roman law. The Justinian legal program initially consisted of three parts. The first was a collection of imperial constitutions, the *Codex Iustinianus*. The second was a compilation of the legal opinions of the best Roman jurists, the *Digest*. Finally, a textbook of Roman law, the *Institutes*, was also compiled by the commission. Later in his reign, Justinian introduced additional legislation by issuing new constitutions, the *Novels*. Viewed together, scholars beginning in the early modern period described these works collectively as the "Body of Civil Law" (*Corpus Iuris Civilis*). These collections of Roman law, above all the *Digest*, were rediscovered in the medieval West in the 11th century and went on to become the basis for civil law throughout much of Latin Europe.

Roman law developed differently in the Byzantine Empire than in the West. It never went out of force. Indeed, the legal compilations of the Justinian age served as the basis of Byzantine secular law. Instead of introducing new legislation, sixth-century Roman law was reworked, translated, or slightly adapted. Even the *Ecloga*, a collection of private law issued by the emperors Leo III and Constantine V in 741 CE and considered by earlier scholars to be a radical departure from Roman law, innovated more in tone than in content.

At the end of the 9th century the first two emperors of the Macedonian Dynasty, Basil I (r. 867–886 CE) and Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE), instituted an impressive program of legal reform, called the "Cleansing of the Ancient Laws." Justinian law was translated into Latin, and a massive Greek version of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* called the *Basilika* or "imperial [books]" was completed, probably in the year 888 CE. The

SCHOOL OF LAW OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Although there were no universities in the Byzantine Empire comparable to those founded in the Medieval West, there did exist several well-known institutions of higher learning. The most well-known of these was the law school of Constantinople, founded by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1055) in 1047. The charter for the law school, known in scholarship as the *Novella Constitutio*, was written by the learned bishop John Mauropous ("Black-footed John"). The head of the school, termed the "guardian and teacher [of the laws]" (*nomophylax didaskalos* [*ton nomon*]), was the future patriarch John Xiphilinos, who was given a gilded staff, a salary, and fine silks, as well as unfettered access to the imperial library. Despite the grandiose language of the school's founding charter, Xiphilinos was its first and only director. Nonetheless, the founding of the law school was representative of a broader revival of the study of Roman law under the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056).

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opening of a law school in Constantinople in 1047 crowned the revival of the study of Roman law. After the 11th century, secular law was gradually supplanted by canon law.

Very popular in Byzantium were compact handbooks of Roman law, which were easier to use than the massive and difficult to understand *Basilika*. The *Ecloga* can be considered the first of these compilations. Many handbooks were produced at the end of the 9th and beginning of the 10th century, including the *Prochiron*, *Eisagoge*, and *Epitome*. Among the most popular handbooks were those devoted to legal problems in a specific context, such as the *Soldier's Law*, the *Farmer's Law*, and *Rhodian Sea-Law*. All three of these texts are of murky origin and uncertain authorship.

Canon law in the Byzantine tradition was drawn from the canons of church councils and letters of church Fathers. Canon and civil law in Byzantium had a very close relationship. Justinian gave the canons of the first four ecumenical councils the force of law, a regulation that was updated and included in the *Basilika*. The Byzantines developed a special type of law book, the *nomokanon*, which combined both church canons (*kanones*) and secular laws (*nomoi*). The most popular *nomokanon* was the so-called *Nomokanon in Fourteen Titles*, which was last revised at the end of the 11th century. The final centuries of Byzantium saw two golden ages of canon law, one in the 12th century and another in the 14th. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Byzantine canon law was still used in the Orthodox Church.

Other than for a brief period during and after the reign of Justinian I, legal education was never standardized in the Byzantine Empire. Instead, law was part of an advanced secondary education. Thus, most educated Byzantines had at least a passing familiarity with the law, and those following careers in the church or civil service would, depending on the offices they held, have had the opportunity to further develop their legal expertise. Byzantine law resonated far beyond the political borders of the Byzantine Empire. It was used by Christians in the Middle East who remained

LEO VI, THE WISE (r. 886–912 CE)

One of the most outstanding emperors in the history of Byzantium, Leo VI was not only a competent ruler but also erudite and a sophisticated writer. Born on September 19, 866 CE, son of Emperor Basil I, the Macedonian (867–886 CE), Leo reached the throne in 886 CE and continued some of his father's policies. His most relevant achievement was to complete the reorganization of the law initiated by his predecessor with the advice of Photius (ca. 810–ca. 893 CE), the famous scholar, official, and later patriarch of Constantinople. Basil had proposed to recover the law of Justinian, which had been partially given up in the years since Justinian's death in 565 CE. Basil left some preparatory works (*Procheiros Nomos*, *Eisagoge tou nomou*) but did not complete the main assignment, a new codification in Greek that should replace the *Corpus iuris civilis* but save its substance. Leo, however, was able to promulgate such a codification, known under the name of *Basilica* ("the imperial laws"), which formally remained as law in force until the end of the empire. Leo also issued several novels (new laws), as well as a draft of the Book of the Eparch (a text governing guilds in Constantinople).

Even though Leo VI is primarily remembered for his legal legacy, he was also prominently erudite, authoring many homilies, orations, hymns, and poems, in addition to a military manual (*Tactica of Leo VI*) and commencing the *Kletorologion* of Philoteos.

Outside this legal and intellectual work, his reign was controversial because of several military defeats and his fourth marriage (Tetragamy) to his mistress, Zoe Karbonopsina, mother of the future Constantine VII, in 906 CE. The union was illegal in the eyes of the church and made him decidedly unpopular.

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loyal to the imperial church, the Melkites, who translated the *Ecloga* and *Prochiron* into Arabic. Some handbooks of Greek secular law like the *Ecloga* were translated into Armenian. Byzantine canon law was translated into Church Slavonic for use in the Balkans and Rus, as well as into Georgian. In short, Byzantine law had a lasting influence on the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; Justinian I, Government Reforms of; Senate; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; *Corpus Iuris Civilis*; Theodosian Code

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Market

The concept of the Byzantine market is defined as an economic system of transactions to exchange goods and services, and the Byzantine economy as a network of relatively "free" independent markets. The word "market" itself appears in some Latin texts that mention market prices: *preta in foro rerum venalium*. Imperial legal enactments specifying this phrase used it to regulate the conversion from commodities into cash of some military officers' fee.

Political continuity from Roman times included central economic authority located in Constantinople from the fourth century CE. In this field the empire interfered more as an independent economic actor than as a regulatory power, and it often obstructed the free initiative of the private sector. The Byzantine Empire occasionally placed embargos on exports, directed primarily at hostile nations. Fundamentally, however, the state's legislative focus in the economy was exclusively on its areas of economic activity. This included mainly modes of acquisition, management, and sale or donation of imperial property (lands, state manufactures, quarries, mines, and monopolies); the contribution of revenues from imperial property to public expenses; and the allotment of food allowances to the capital to the military, and to professional groups in the service of the state.

The free market was partly in the hands of independent traders and somewhat of the so-called *navicularii*, ship providers engaged in the remunerated transfer of grain for public distribution but who also could trade freely, with the benefit of the fiscal exemptions they enjoyed.

The existence of numerous markets in the Byzantine economy indicates that transactions in trade took place on varied levels. To classify these markets, historians apply different criteria, but the most commonly accepted use parameters such as duration and distance. Consequently, markets included three categories: local, regional, and interregional.

Local is defined as 1-day transit time, or within a radius of less than about 50 kilometers by land, or the distance of one day's sailing, to a maximum of 2 or 3 days' travel on foot. The regional level usually involved travel of less than 10 days but above the distances involved in local trade. Regional trade also involved professional traders, whereas local trade was still partly in the hands of the local producers themselves. Local and regional trade largely concerned everyday staples or foodstuff, but it also included raw material and energy sources used for crafts such as hemp, flax, leather, iron, wood, and charcoal. Interregional trade connected two different regions that each had a radius of 100 to 300 kilometers. This type of trade usually did not take place over a long distance, but there were exceptions to this rule, for the two regions were not systematically adjacent. It was often but not always international; conversely, regional exchanges might cross political boundaries in the middle Byzantine period. For example, from the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) through the Muslim wars, any kind of trade was primarily internal, predominantly taking place inside the empire.

TRADE

Although agriculture was the basis of the Byzantine economy, commerce was also important. Byzantium was the only commercial power in Europe during the early Middle Ages. Although Constantinople was the major trade port linking Western Europe with the Muslim world and the Far East, other Byzantine ports, such as Trebizon and Thessaloniki, were also important. Byzantine merchants were active all along the vast commercial routes crossing the Mediterranean space and through the Middle East. International trade was important not only for the Byzantines but also the internal market, since the capital was a huge consumer of every kind of good produced in the different provinces of the empire.

In the markets of Constantinople, a large scope of goods and commodities were traded. The most significant were grain and other alimentary products, as well as luxury items (silk, perfumes, spices). Additionally, the slave trade had a noteworthy presence because Byzantium was the main trader of the slave workforce in the Middle Ages. Slaves (*douloi*) were captured in the wars (particularly among the Slavs, hence the modern name) and used either internally for the consumption of the Byzantine aristocracy or for exportation, above all to the Muslim world. The main import was grain, and the primary exports were silk and slaves.

Trade was not a self-regulating activity in Byzantium but widely administered, especially that of essential items, such as the supply of grain for the capital's population. Also, the other branches of commerce (especially those of import-export products) were organized in guilds, controlled by the eparch of the city or other higher officials. International trade was broadly headed by the state, which signed important trade treaties with several foreign powers, including the Rus' (people migrating from Scandinavia) and the Italian maritime cities.

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Hubs were another distinguishing characteristic of trade in both the ancient and Byzantine worlds. The most common type of trading hub was local, wherein individuals producing a commodity in a particular area sold their goods to traders from whom they then bought ítems that were not produced locally. A regional trading hub covered a wider area and received a larger quantity of products produced in more distant lands and traded over a longer distance. Such regional trading hubs included the Byzantine cities of Thessalonica, Amorion, and Dyrrhachium. Thessalonica, the second-largest Byzantine city, could not compete with Constantinople in terms of trade volume and variety, but it was widely known for the trade fair held during its annual festival of Saint Demetrios. Cattle and textiles were the main commodities traded at this fair, which drew merchants from all over the Mediterranean, including from lands as far away as Syria, Venice, and Spain.

Constantinople and, in the Muslim world, Baghdad were prime examples of the third type of trade hub—great cities that served as centers for long-distance trade. Such trade centers were extraordinary cases; they served as both huge markets for any kind of goods and enormous trading hubs. In these cities, commodities were sold in large quantities for consumption in the city and its surrounding region, as well as for

resale in more distant areas. Goods from these trading centers also flowed to such centers of specialized regional trade as Artsn, Kherson, and Trebizond.

Finally, it is necessary to add that regulation and control of measures, weights, and payments—an essential condition of the functioning of market exchange generally, and specifically an important foundation of the Byzantine economy—together with indirect taxes, existed from the 5th to the 15th century. The unified system inherited from Rome that was of great benefit in supporting market exchanges and lowering transaction costs never disappeared, even when Byzantium had to accept, from the 12th century onward, that the privileged Italian trade communities could use their own measures in their colonies.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Weights; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; Professional Associations

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Municipal Administration

When we talk about the municipal administration in the Byzantine Empire, we are referring to the cities outside Constantinople/Byzantium. The capital had its own model of administration, totally different from that of the other cities. Until the late Byzantine period, it was ruled by the prefect of the city (*eparchos tes poleos*), a high-ranking official directly designated by the emperor. Next to the prefect was the Senate (*synkletos*), created for Constantinople by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) in 330 CE as a reduplication of the Roman Senate, but it had just limited functions as counsel of the prefect of the city and a role in the imperial ceremony.

In the rest of the cities of the empire there was no unified model of local administration. There were many differences depending on the geographical regions. Anyway, it is possible to outline some common features for most of Byzantine history.

After major changes in the urban administration introduced by the reforms of Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine the Great in the fourth century CE, the ancient self-government of the cities was restricted in favor of a more extended power of the imperial officials. The city administration was limited to the local oligarchy of landowners. These leading citizens (*curiales*, *decuriones*, or *bouletai*) assembled in the

local council (curia or *boule*), which was the government organ of the city. The right qualification to be a member of the curia depended on the land property of the person. It varied from region to region, but it seems plausible that the minimum could be approximately 38 hectares or 94 acres. The number of members of the curia was large, very often 500, even sometimes up to 1,200 (Antioch). Membership in the curia became hereditary, unless their property was impoverished. It was rather a burden than an honor, as the *curiales* were collectively responsible for payment of imperial taxes in the city, so that, in case they were unable to collect the prescribed amount of taxes, they were required by law to make up the deficit with their own resources. In compensation for this onerous responsibility, they received some fiscal and legal privileges, giving them a status of social élite and a share of delegated imperial power and authority that could be turned to their advantage. They tried to prevent taxpayers of their cities from enjoying the same benefits, an attitude that the imperial power rejected (Cod. Theod. 11.28.10).

Besides tax collection, the curia had a host of powers and obligations. It had certain rights of justice and public order; administered the real estates of the city and controlled local expenditure; sent embassies to the emperor and issued honorific decrees; maintained the provisioning of the imperial postal service and the billeting of imperial troops in its locality; and oversaw water and food supply, building activity, repair and maintenance of public buildings and the walls of the city, appointment of urban teachers, maintenance of public baths, medical care, and other public facilities. It was also responsible for the organization of civic amenities that the *curiales* had to provide at their own expenses (Cod. Theod. 15.1.24, 34). In addition, they contributed to their municipalities with special services (*leitourgiai*), motivated by local patriotism or generosity toward their fatherland. Major policy decisions, however, were not charged to the curia. They were always decided by the provincial governor and his representatives.

The fulfillment of all these obligations, as well as the abusive powers of the provincial governors, made the office so cumbersome (especially after the fourth century CE attachment of local taxes to the emperor's res private or private property) that the *curiales* became more and more reluctant to serve in the curia and tried to escape it by moving to Constantinople, where they could receive more profitable offices in the provincial administration, or by joining the clergy or the bar. The imperial authority reacted by taking coercive measures (as the obligatory adscription of criminals to the curia), by installing permanent representatives for the administration of the city (*defensor civitatis*, defender of the city, originally an imperially appointed official to protect the rights of the poor), or entrusting the city to its bishop and his staff. The *curiales* lost therefore the prestige and the political power that they had before. Shortage of money, weakening of the curia, and constant and growing interference of the central administration marked urban development during the fifth and sixth centuries. The curia was declining as an institution, in size and prestige, and its meetings and deliberations were dwindling, unless for ceremonial purposes. Notwithstanding, it continued to exist in the following centuries, but not in every city and in decreasing number of members. Finally, the emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE) promulgated a

decree (Nov. Leon. 46) that abrogated the laws on the *curiales*, admitting that the older regulation had been for some time a dead letter.

In the 11th and 12th centuries some forms of self-government were reestablished in the provincial towns in different forms. For example, Monemvasia (Peloponnese) was administered by two officials, one local and one imperial, analogous to the dual monarchs of ancient Sparta. Other localities of the empire had a similar local autonomy in the late empire, as Thessalonica, Ioannina, or Arta. Yet, in any case, in the last period, the scope of this local autonomy was limited, not only by the imperial administration, but above all by the power of local landowners and of the church.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Senate; *Organization and Administration*: Province; Taxes; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; *Groups and Organizations*: *Curiales*; *Key Events*: Theodosian Code; *Key Places*: Antioch; *Primary Documents*: Document 5

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Offices

The use of officers in the Byzantine state was a legacy of the Roman Empire. The various offices of the military, judicial, fiscal, ecclesiastical, and palatine administrations are known from almost all sources. Although the degree to which the state was bureaucratic—that is, impersonally run by career officers—changed over time and was largely determined by the emperor, the officers themselves are ubiquitous in the historical record. It is further clear that, at least during the middle Byzantine period, the holding of office was the primary way that members of the elite interfaced with the imperial government.

Evidence for offices can be divided into roughly two groups. The first group consisted of sources that refer to individuals who held specific offices. Lead seals constitute the most substantial source for these officers, especially from the 9th through 11th centuries, the height of the theme system of provincial administration. Narrative

Byzantine lead seals could be identified by several lines of inscription across the surface, or, as in this example, could contain a circular inscription around the seal. This practice was similar to, and possibly imitated, the inscriptions of Byzantine coins that identified the emperor responsible for issuing them. Seals were usually made of precious and base metals and impressed into wet clay that was allowed to dry and harden. The clay seal impression was then affixed to official documents and trade goods to ensure their authenticity and identify the owner. (Yale University Art Gallery)

histories and chronicles from the same period almost invariably include the title and office of the individual, but these tend to be officers of the highest ranks, and seals are required to fill the gaps lower down in the ranks. More varied, though less substantial, testimony can be found in letters, saints' lives, and, from the end of the 10th century on, legal documents, especially from the monasteries of Mount Athos and from southern Italy. Inscriptions on architectural elements and on objects such as reliquaries (vessels holding body parts of saints said to have miraculous power) and signet rings (used to seal important documents) provide additional evidence.

The second group includes sources that refer to the offices themselves, without reference to individual officeholders. These include lists of precedence, such as the *Notitia Dignitatum* (5th century), John Lydos's *On the Magistracies* (6th century), the 9th- and 10th-century *tactica*, and the *Treatise on the Dignities and Offices* of pseudo-Kodinos (14th century). Other state documents, especially those preserved in the mid-10th-century *De cerimoniis* (*Book of Ceremonies*) as well as the 9th- and 10th-century military manuals, are not as systematic but include relevant information on offices and officers present at various imperial ceremonies and on military campaigns. Although most of the data for offices is for men or eunuchs, some women are known by using the feminine forms of their husbands' offices and titles.

Offices can be divided roughly into four different spheres: the military, the civil administration (including the fisc and the judiciary), the palace, and the church. Official duties and responsibilities, however, often crossed boundaries. Judges often held fiscal offices concurrently, and from the mid-10th century, theme judges (*kritai*) were responsible for the administration of the province, hitherto under the control of the

strategos (general). Palatine officials or high dignitaries, often the individuals most trusted by the emperor, were tapped to lead expeditionary forces—for example, Constantine Gongyles in the failed expedition to Crete in 949 CE and Nicephorus Ouranus against the Bulgars and Arabs in the late 10th and early 11th centuries.

From late antiquity, the palatine administration was under the master of offices (*magister officiorum*). Offices in the guard units eventually transformed into dignities (*spatharioi*, "sword bearer," and *protospatharioi*, "first sword bearer"). Various central bureaus and their clerical and administrative staff were under a count (*comes*). The sacred largesses (*sacrae largitiones*) and private domains (*res privata*), along with the fiscal function of the praetorian prefectures, were eventually replaced by the *logothesia* or *sekreta* under the *logothetai*. Provincial administration was headed by governors at three levels: the prefect (praetorian prefect), diocese (*vicarius*), and province, with other officials in cities. Military regiments were under the authority of the prefectural *magister militum* until the development of the theme system and the ascendancy of the *strategos* as general and provincial governor. This system eventually gave way to larger regional commands under a duke (*doux*) or *katepano*. Alongside this, professional forces (*tagmata*) were led by domestics (*domestikoi*), the most important of which was the *domestikos* of the schools (*Scholae*).

The church hierarchy was headed by patriarchs in Constantinople, Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. The final three were lost after the Arab conquests until the Crusades, when the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch were restored. In addition to a series of bishops for towns and cities, the church hierarchy also included abbeys and monasteries and the patriarchal administration. These officers stand apart from those in other administrations but nevertheless appear in lists of precedence and as participants in imperial ceremonies.

The middle Byzantine status quo is evident in the lists of precedence from the 9th and 10th centuries, notably the *Taktikon Uspensky* (early to mid-9th century) and the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (899 CE). After the patriarch of Constantinople and the highest dignitaries (usually members of the imperial family), representatives of the four main spheres appear: *strategoi* and *domestikoi*, judges (*kritai*), *logothetai*, palatine officials (including eunuchs, like the *parakoimomenos*), and representatives of the circus factions. Bishops and other church officials sometimes appear alongside civil and military officers in these lists, or in separate lists.

Offices were granted by word or decree (*dia logou*) by the emperor. Narrative sources occasionally attest the appointment of officers on the spot by an emperor; a simple soldier named Phokas, for example, was elevated to the rank of *tourmarches* (subordinate to a *strategos*) by Basil I (r. 867–886 CE) for bravery. During this period, officers were primarily paid in annual salaries in cash (*roga*), which were distributed by the emperor during Holy Week. Liudprand of Cremona, a bishop and envoy from the Holy Roman emperor to Constantinople in 950 CE, relates this ceremony.

A new system of administration emerged by the end of the 11th century with reforms under Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118). Although a bureaucracy continued to function, the highest officeholders were often members of the imperial family, by

blood or marriage, or close associates. Fiscal and financial departments were centralized under the *megas logariastes*, and other central administrative bureaus were put under the *logothetes* of the *sekreta*. The *protasekretis* headed the imperial chancery and the system of courts, and the *mesazon* served as the intermediary between the emperor and the government. On the military side, the *megas doux* was in control of the navy, the *megas domestikoi* of the East and West led the *tagmata*, and *doukes* commanded the provincial armies.

From the 13th century to the end of the empire, the imperial government and the officers that it employed contracted and increasingly depended on imperial household officials, such as the *mesazon*, who became a more important figure. Court officials often filled military or administrative needs on an ad hoc basis, a practice that certainly existed in earlier periods but that came to define administration under the Palaeologian Dynasty, which ruled from 1259 until 1453.

Lain Wilson

See also: *Government and Politics*: *Kletorologion* of Philotheos; Master of Offices; *Organization and Administration*: Bureaucracy; Dignities; Fiscal System; Hierarchy; Judge, Justice; Province; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Liudprand of Cremona; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; *Military*: *Notitia Dignitatum*; *Strategos*; *Tagmata*; Themes; *Key Places*: Antioch

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Penalties

The Byzantine Empire has had traditionally a very bad reputation as a barbarous and ruthless civilization, and this is above all depending on the severity of its penal system. Notwithstanding, in comparison with other legal orders at the same moment, and even in comparison with the late Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire was not particularly cruel, rather on the contrary. Even further, according to their own self-conception, the criminal law of the middle Byzantine Empire was more humanitarian than that of the time of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE). In the *prooimion* of the Ecloga, the legal codification of the Isaurian emperors of the middle of the eighth century, it is stated that that this enactment corrected the Justinian legislation "towards greater humanity." And this is not totally false, considering that the use of capital punishment was less extended in such a Byzantine legislation than in the late Roman one. On the other hand, many of the hard penalties that can be found there (such as whipping, shaving of the head, blinding, mutilation, torture, etc.) were already law in force in Justinian's time, but especially in the military field and according to custom, even though they were not formally laid down in the laws. And moreover, Byzantine legislation introduced more precision in the type of punishment applied, and therefore criminal proceedings came under greater control by the state, depriving the judges of some arbitrary power. Whatever the case may be, the full picture of the Byzantine criminal law offers a wide variety of public punishments that make an impression of horror on the modern mentality.

Only in the Ecloga (chapter 17) is it possible to find a coherent system of penal law in accordance with the legal provisions of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. This penal system was also adopted by the Macedonian emperors. In the Basilica of Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE), the penal prescriptions of the Ecloga were also adopted, but without abandoning the framework of the Justinian codification. Consequently, in the criminal law of the middle Byzantine period, several contradictory provisions coexisted that caused a high degree of legal uncertainty among judges and inhabitants.

Despite its formal declarations, the use of the death penalty was quite common in post-Justinian Byzantine legislation. It was prescribed for crimes against the state security (rebellion, conspiracy) and those considered to offend the dignity of the church (grave heresy), as well as those who broke the natural law, above all the greatest sexual behaviors contrary to the moral order of the moment (e.g., incest, homosexuality). Also, it was imposed on other types of major crimes, such as parricide, infanticide, violent abduction, poisoning, deliberate homicide, robbery, or intentional fire. Capital punishment was executed in very different ways—usually death by the sword, but sometimes with more brutality, as beheading, hanging on a stake (*furca*), or even burning. Crucifixion was a method of capital punishment that was abolished because of obvious religious reasons in the Christian era.

The most characteristic public penalties of the Byzantine Empire were the corporal punishments. As mentioned, for some behaviors that carried capital punishment in the Roman Byzantine period, it was prescribed to impose a corporal penalty, such as

for zoophile or bestiality or adultery. It has been argued that this prominence of corporal penalties could possibly have derived from a very strict interpretation of the Evangelical passage of Mt. 5: 28–30: "if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than your whole body to go to hell." On the other hand, physical punishment was relatively easy to administer and was a public deterrent in the hands of the state. Among these corporal punishments was a big variety, especially mutilation (castration, amputation of hands or nose, removal of the tongue). Very significant was blinding, since it was used as a political instrument to destroy political rivals rather than as a punishment for general crimes (e.g., treachery, stealing sacred objects from the altar, some types of heresy, magic). Sometimes castration was used with the same purpose. Severe beating or whipping was commonly applied, often in association with other penalties. As a kind of infamy, the severing of the nose (rhinotimy) and shaving the head (generally through skilling the forehand) were practiced. Exile and fines existed as penalties as well, but they were rarely applied. Confiscation, as infamy, was usually linked to other penalties. On the contrary, prison was not considered a kind of public penalty, but only as a preventive measure while pending an investigation of a crime or as a military arrest.

It must be considered that, next to the public penalties, there were also private penalties (*poena*, *prostima*), which could be stipulated as a supplementary agreement to a contract, to properly execute the contractual duties. They consisted of the payment of a certain sum of money, depending on the significance of the breach of contract. They were very frequent and played an important role in Byzantine contractual law, to the point that they had to be specifically regulated by imperial legislation to make them compulsory clauses in contracts.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of; *Organization and Administration*: Judge, Justice; Law; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Justinian; Lecapenus, Romanus I; *Key Events: Corpus Iuris Civilis*

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Province

In the late Roman and early Byzantine period, a province was the smallest imperial administrative and territorial unit under the jurisdiction of a governor. The administrative organization changes and revisions were frequent, mainly due to the military pressures and fiscal requirements. This process of adaptation to circumstances consisted of three distinct periods.

Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) was the first emperor to introduce major administrative reforms. He based them on three principles: separate civil and military functions, create small provincial units, and form a scalar structure and interpose the vicar of a diocese and the praetorian prefect between the provincial governor and the emperor.

The previous distinction between senatorial and imperial provinces disappeared, and all fell under the authority of the emperor. Formerly, these provinces were small, but their territories were vast, and the governors became very powerful, posing a threat to the imperial throne. For this reason, to avoid dangerous situations, Diocletian created small units, dividing 57 provinces existing before his ascension into 96 with purely civil authority. Under Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE), a certain number of small neighboring provinces formed a unit called the diocese, and accordingly 13 new ones established.

In the following period, along with the centralization of power, Emperor Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) introduced a new type of provincial administration. It was the culmination of the process that begun under Emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE). Constantine split the entire empire into two segments, the East and the West, and, excluding the cities of Rome and Constantinople, divided it into four large prefectures, each governed by a praetorian prefect. The prefectures were broken down into dioceses, each under a vicar. Finally, dioceses were divided into provinces, as fundamental governmental units ruled by governors. The provincial reform affected mainly Italy, which lost its position of leading district, becoming a mere province.

The primary source for the provincial organization and structure during Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) and his successors is the *Notitia dignitatum*, a fifth-century official list of court, civil, and military offices, which records 120 provinces. At this time, the governor had strictly judicial and administrative functions, not military. The essential characteristics of Diocletian's (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine's (r. 306–337 CE) reforms included the establishment of absolute imperial power and strict separation of military and civil functions. This system remained intact for three and a half centuries, with only some minor alterations.

Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) introduced specific reforms that led in a new direction. He combined some of the small provinces into large units. He eliminated some of the dioceses and vicars and thus weakened the scalar system. In some cases, one individual would have both military and civil authority. Diocletian's and Justinian's objectives regarding general reforms were different. The former aimed to ensure control over the provincial governments from one center; the latter wanted to suppress corruption and despotism.

These changes were not thorough, and some did not last long, but they gave grounds for an administrative revolution, produced as a consequence of external necessities. In the seventh century CE, bitter enemies surrounded the empire, so all imperial energies centered on warfare and a defense system. Military needs were the number one priority, and the introduction of the new system gradually led to the dissolution of the old one. The replacement began in Italy and Africa, at the end of the sixth century CE, where the conflict between military and civil authorities disrupted campaigns against the Lombards and the Berbers.

The military governors were awarded the title of exarchs and occupied the principal position, with the civil authority below them in case of conflict—in other words, a separation between civil and military authorities, making a rebellion more difficult. Any adjustment would point out how severe the crisis was in these provinces. In the East, Saracen threats to Asia Minor imposed a policy of the same kind.

Therefore, before the end of the seventh century CE, the territory of the Byzantine Empire was split into six large military provinces, three in Europe and three in Asia. They were the Exarchate of Africa or Cartagena; Exarchate of Italy or Ravenna; Thrace; Opsikion, including Bithynia, Honorias, Paphlagonia, parts of Dardanelles, and Phrygia; Anatolic province encompassing the greater part of West and central Asia Minor; and Armeniac, which involved eastern Asia Minor. Karabisidnoi, naval circumscription, comprised the southern coastland of Asia Minor and the Aegean. The old prefecture of Illyricum was excluded from the system, because this part of the empire was then considered a lost territory. Nevertheless, the prefect of Illyricum retained his military power, and his sphere of influence extended slightly beyond Thessalonica.

The Eastern changes, perhaps initiated by Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), did not interfere with the civil administration, except that its leaders answered to the authority of the military commanders. But Leo III (r. 717–741 CE), an expert administrative reformer, eliminated the old system. Unlike Diocletian's (r. 284–305 CE) reforms, he constructed a system in which one individual assumed both military and civil powers. The *strategos* or military commander was simultaneously also a civil governor; his higher officers (*turmarchs*) were likewise civil functionaries, and the scalar structure was abandoned, including both posts of the vicars and the praetorian prefect of the East. Some of their functions merged into those of the prefect of the city, but no authority existed between the *strategoi* and the emperor. The new provinces, called themes (*thema* is a word for corps in Greek), included some of Diocletian's (r. 284–305 CE) divisions and were similar in size to the first-century BCE provinces of Augustus (r. 27 BCE–14 CE).

This third and last provincial reform had, like the previous ones, its peculiarities. The list of themes in the 11th century differed significantly from those of the 8th. Eliminating parts of the large themes reduced them in size, and these parts formed smaller units. These changes repeated Augustus's (r. 27 BCE–14 CE) provincial reductions, causing the themes to vary greatly in size and importance. Leo himself started the project by splitting up the Anatolic command into two themes: Anatolic and Thracesian. Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE) systematically implemented the principle

of division and was also responsible for introducing a new ecclesiastical division of the empire.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; Heraclius; Justinian; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Military*: *Notitia Dignitatum*; *Strategika*; *Strategos*; Themes

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Recruitment

In his military treatise, Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE) called peasants and soldiers the pillars upon which the state rested. For most of Byzantine history, the former not only funded the military with the produce of its labor, but also provided recruits for the latter.

In the early Byzantine Empire (fourth to sixth centuries), the army comprised three major divisions: troops stationed at the frontier (*limitanei*), mobile field armies (*comitatenses*), and special military units that served as the imperial bodyguard. The *limitanei* made up the bulk of the troops, and recruitment was by conscription.

Registers were used to identify and record conscripts, who had to be at least 18 years old. Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) decreed a hereditary obligation for this service, and annual conscription occurred in the provinces, with towns expected to produce the number of recruits established by state officials. Such service was unpopular, and some potential recruits opted to cut fingers off to become ineligible, rather than serve, while others sought to avoid service by joining monastic ranks, which was made illegal. Compensation for service was low, but an important advantage was the liberation from any additional labor or revenue burdens imposed by the government for which soldiers were exempt.

By the era of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), the *limitanei* was around 176,000, and the *comitatenses* had increased to 150,000. Troop size was augmented further with troops stationed in the newly conquered territories in North Africa, Italy, and Spain. The *comitatenses* and imperial bodyguards were recruited by pulling soldiers off the *limitanei* and by additional voluntary recruitment and not by conscription. Certain regions, such as Illyricum in the western Balkans and later Isauria in Anatolia, were highly valued for their recruitment potential. With the loss of the Balkans to Slavs and Bulgars in the seventh century, Armenia became an increasingly important recruiting ground.

A recruit was referred to as a *tiro* (plural *tirones*), and he received a fraction of the pay and provisions of a full soldier. Recruits could be stationed with a cohort and drawn upon as replacements, as recommended by the later fourth-century military treatise *De Rebus Bellicis (On the Activities of Wars).* Once called upon, a soldier moved from recruit to become an enlisted infantryman (*pedes*) or cavalryman (*eques*). The state provisioned troops with all equipment, weapons, and horses.

The empire's military forces also included *foederati*, which were non-Roman soldiers who served by treaty (*foedus*) under their own commanders. In the sixth century, these were referred to as allies (*symmachoi* in Greek) and operated on all frontiers during Justinian's wars. Federates received provisions and remuneration, which was paid in lump sum to their commander, who distributed funds to his troops. The empire also recruited foreigners and incorporated nonnative troops directly into imperial units. Private guardsmen (*bucellarii*) who were directly recruited by high-ranking commanders as their own personal force were another component of military power. General Belisarius was accompanied by an enormous unit of 7,000, while other senior commanders had fewer than 1,000. These units also engaged in combat.

By the sixth century, recruitment increasingly became voluntary, and Justinian eliminated the mandatory conscription laws, though the era witnessed recruiting challenges during his reign, which was chronically at war and, after 541 CE, weakened by the plague. It was not an increase in pay that attracted soldiers, but the commutation of in-kind provisions to a cash allowance during the reign of Anastasius that had the effect of increasing soldiers' total income and making service more attractive. In the later sixth century, Emperor Maurice allowed sons to replace fathers who had fallen in service in the *comitatenses*, which was a very popular concession. The commutation from in-kind provisions to cash eventually became a fiscal burden on the state, which compelled Maurice to cut back by providing partial in-kind provisions and making a corresponding reduction in the cash allowance, which caused a mutiny in the army.

The empire's financial problems increased astronomically in the seventh century, when the state's solvency effectively collapsed because of the long Sassanian Persian War (602–629 CE) followed by the loss of most of its territory to the emergent Arab Empire in the east and North Africa and to the Slavs and Bulgars in the Balkans. Imperial armies withdrew to Anatolia and were settled there. The total army size was slightly more than 100,000 and dropped to 80,000 by the later eighth century. In lieu of regular pay, the state provided grants of land. This became known as the theme system, with the armies referred to as *themata* (singular *thema*), which also became the term used for the provinces themselves. The exact process of this transformation is much debated and took time for development. Each thematic army lived in and defended its theme and the state furnished in-kind provisions, with hereditary service once again imposed. The state maintained registers of land and soldiers, and the thematic commander, the *strategos*, called soldiers up as needed for training and service. Anatolia furnished the bulk of the army, supplemented by the recruitment of nonnatives, notably Armenians and Slavs.

In addition to the thematic armies, Emperor Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE) created new mobile units known as *tagmata*, which were much like the *comitatenses* in contrast to the defensive *limitanei*. The *tagmata* were salaried, well-trained standing troops, which were not tied to a location, like the thematic units. The troops were recruited through voluntary service, and their numbers and units expanded throughout the middle Byzantine period. Their mobility provided greater tactical flexibility, and the *tagmata* became more valuable than thematic forces during subsequent centuries, when Byzantium began to engage in offensive warfare.

As the Byzantine Empire expanded in its middle period, so did its thematic system, with new *themata* created wherever the empire established territorial control, from Antioch in the east, to the Danube in the north, and southern Italy in the west. To further secure its hold and its recruitment needs, the stated used large population transfers, resettling tens of thousands of families to promote imperial security and support military efforts.

Many emperors practiced such population transfers from the 6th to the 11th century, including Tiberius II (r. 574–582 CE), Maurice (r. 582–602 CE), Justinian II (r. 685–695 CE; 705–711 CE), Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), Leo IV (r. 775–780 CE), Nicephorus I (r. 802–811 CE), Nicephorus Phocas (r. 963–969 CE), and Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE).

The link between land and military service was threatened by powerful aristocratic families who began to enlarge their landholdings at the expense of small landowners. Since this phenomenon threatened to undermine state power and the thematic system, emperors issued legislation to counteract this. Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE) was the first emperor to issue such laws protecting peasants, and this legislation continued through the reign of Basil II (r. 976–1025). After Basil, the imperial will to continue this vigilance gave way and thematic armies began to weaken during the century, though the causes of this waning are a matter of controversy. Imperial policies also took their toll. In 1053, Emperor Constantine IX (r. 1042–1055) commuted the military service for some 50,000 soldiers in the Armenian themes of eastern Anatolia in return for tax payments, removing these units from potential defense of Anatolia just shortly before the arrival of the Seljuq Turks.

While their effectiveness was in question, thematic units were still available to answer the imperial call for service long into the 11th century. The Byzantine defeat at Manzikert in 1071, followed by a decade of internal conflict and civil war (1071–1082), was disastrous to the state, and the thematic system collapsed. From that point to the end of the empire, emperors increasingly relied on the recruitment of foreigners, including Pechenegs, Turks, Franks, Normans, and Rus—who formed the empire's famed Varangian Guard—and the hiring of mercenary units, which replaced previous service by thematic and tagmatic units. Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) hired large numbers of foreign troops for his military campaigns and recruited indigenous troops that were now named by their place of enlistment, such as the Macedonians, the Thracians, the Thessalians, etc. The development of the *pronoia* system in the 12th century was another means to secure troops. This granted to the *pronoia* holder the

revenues of a specifically designated area in return for military or other service to the state.

In its final centuries, the Byzantine army was largely composed of foreigners from the Balkans (Serbs, Bulgarians, etc.), from various nomadic tribes (Turks, Alans, Cumans, etc.), and from Latin forces of the West, with indigenous troops, recruited largely from Thrace and Macedonia, reduced to a minority in Byzantium's total armed forces.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Law; *Individuals*: Anastasius, Flavius; Belisarius; Comnenus, Alexius I; Diocletian; Justinian; Lecapenus, Romanus I; Maurice; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Franks; Normans; Slavs; *Key Events*: Manzikert, Battle of; Persia, Wars with; *Military*: *Bucellari*; *Foederati*; *Strategos*; *Tagmata*; Themes; Varangian Guard; *Key Places*: Antioch

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Slavery

Slavery is a labor system whereby human beings are considered property that can be bought and sold; slaves are a source of involuntary, unpaid labor for their owners and have no right to cease working or otherwise alter their status. The Greeks and Romans kept slaves, so the Byzantine Empire naturally inherited the institution of slavery, although the Byzantines practiced the institution in a different, more flexible way, and their legislation partially defined it.

Slavery (*douleia* in Greek) was a regular feature of the Byzantine social and economic life over many centuries of its history. Because slaves occupied the lower end of the social hierarchy, the Byzantines saw them as a type of possession, and their rights were therefore minimal. They were not allowed to acquire ownership of any property for themselves, and they could not appear as a witness in court. Responsibility for their behavior fell on owners, who even could use lethal force to correct it. The church insisted on the mutual obligation of both sides, calling upon slaves to be obedient and on owners to treat their slaves well.

Slaves could come from different sources. The children of an enslaved couple belonged to their owner, as did any child born to an enslaved woman. The owner, in turn, had an infant's future in his hands—the child could be sold, abandoned, or raised within the household. The decision he might take rested on circumstances or economic conditions. The second source of slaves came from the numerous wars the Byzantines engaged in. Enemy captives were taken during warfare and sometimes executed afterward, but on many occasions these prisoners would become subject to trade, exchange, ransom, or enslavement. Captive citizens of the empire retained some rights—for instance, their marriages were recognized and their wills were enforced. Piracy and purchase in the slave market were the usual sources of foreign slaves, whose purchase was regulated by imperial decree. By law, people could not sell themselves as a way of avoiding financial obligations.

Byzantine slavery was characteristic of urban settlements, and most slaves worked in Constantinople as servants in private households and/or laborers in workshops. Few people were wealthy enough to own large numbers of slaves. Slaves were engaged in agriculture when needed, or in production of items for everyday use. Skilled enslaved individuals, artisans, were always welcomed to participate in manufacture of high-quality goods, such as jewelry. In large urban households, slaves participated in all household chores and raised children. It was also possible to lease slaves to other families for pay.

Some historians point out that agricultural slaves played a minimal role in the Byzantine state, as they hardly participated in the production of wealth of the dominant class. Some sources suggest many of them transformed into *coloni adscripticii*, or serfs, and they were given their portions on estates. This way slaves came more to approximate tied but free tenants who cultivated their land.

Throughout time, the status of slaves gradually improved, and both the church and imperial legislation supported this tendency. For example, the early Christian Church recognized the legacy of slavery in its teachings, and the Bible recorded it but discouraged it in practice. In a similar fashion, Justinian's I codification of the Roman law, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, improved the position of slaves, made their liberation easier, and even recommended it. High democratic or moral ideals as well as Christian understanding did not explain this transformation. It was a mere fact that in the economic life of the sixth-century CE, slaves as a labor force exercised a secondary role in Byzantine society.

There were many examples where a difference in faith between master and slave was present, and it was considered a specific issue. Masters preferred to convert slaves into their own religion, and Christianization of non-Christian slaves was the general rule. On the other hand, the laws did not allow non-Christians to possess Christian slaves. Byzantine legislation aspired to control the situation, apparently with an aim to prevent Christians from being subjected to non-Christians.

Regarding the slave trade, some historians consider that the Byzantine Empire benefited from its slave trade by exploiting prisoners of war and selling them to eminent Byzantine citizens. These prisoners of war, predominantly Slavs and Bulgars in the 10th century CE, derived mostly from military campaigns in the Balkans as well

as from regions north of the Black Sea. Many of them ended up working in mansions and rural areas throughout the empire.

Some scholars have also documented the buying and selling of women and children as slaves after the Byzantines reconquered the island of Crete from the Muslims in the 10th century CE. The empire also enforced legislation to prevent indebted parents from selling their children to pay off debts.

The legal status of slaves improved over time, and by the 9th century CE most slaves enjoyed some property rights. During the 11th and 12th centuries, their general living conditions became better and, moreover, their rights as individuals were acknowledged. The church allowed them to be baptized, to receive communion, and to be given last rites at death. Under Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118), slaves could also marry. Due to these changes, slaves, formerly classified as private property, began to be thought of as human beings.

Very often slaves received freedom in recognition of long years of service to a single landowner, or after his death. The manumission of slaves was commonly acknowledged with a special church service. The presence of slaves was not universal in the late medieval period, and in economic terms, they became rather insignificant. Even if they worked within a household, slaves did not differ from other servants, so they were for the most part free citizens.

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See also: *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: *Coloni*; *Key Events*: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*

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State Property

It has been commonplace among many historians of the late Roman Empire and Byzantium to say that the economy in such periods of history ran along strictly socialist lines (e.g., John Julius Norwich, *A Short History of Byzantium*, 1997). This statement seems somewhat overstated, but it is true that the Byzantine state retained the power to intervene in many vital sectors of the economy. The state had the monopoly of issuing coinage. It exercised formal control over interest rates, and it set the guidelines and details for the activity of the guilds and corporations in Constantinople. The government operated in moments of crisis to ensure provisioning of capital and to keep down the price of grain. It tried therefore to control internal circulation of commodities and international trade to a considerable extent. At the

same time, it usually collected a large part of the surplus in the form of tax and put it back in circulation, through distribution in the way of salaries to state officials, the army, a part of the church, or investment in public works, buildings, and pieces of art.

The Byzantine state was also the largest landowner in the empire. The state owned all the land that was not owned by private individuals or institutions. Besides, abandoned land on which no tax had been paid for 30 years also become property of the state, and naturally it owned all land gained by conquest, if its previous owners had abandoned it. In practice, however, the widespread and uncontrollable method of the encroachment of state land limited the effects of this extensive state ownership. It is then necessary to distinguish different types of state-owned real property:

First *basilika* or *demoslaka* designated property held and managed directly by the state, depending on whether it nominally belonged to the emperor or not. They were common in the early and middle periods of the Byzantine Empire, not so much in the later one. In reality, it was difficult to draw a clear dividing line between the land assets of the state and those of the crown. It seems probable that the crown's property consisted largely of organized estates, whereas the state tended to own scattered pieces of land, often within village communities. Slaves and animals belonging to the state, under the supervision of state officials, worked this type of property. The state also exploited mineral deposits on a direct basis. There were, nevertheless, several exceptions to this general description.

Second, there existed state property held by *pronoia* holders (*pronoiaroi*). *Pronoia* was a Byzantine institution somehow like the Western fief. In a technical sense, it was a grant that temporally transferred imperial economic rights to an individual or an institution, and at times it implied military service. Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) first used it for the turbulent aristocracy of his time and attempted to remove them from Constantinople, but from the 12th century onward it became a permanent institution, developing into essentially a license to obtain the tax revenues derived from a specific property and the households of the people living in the boundaries (*paroikoi*). But the *pronoiaroi* acquired at the same time the right to the rents on some of the property he assigned to him, as well as the labor services of the *paroikoi*. Occasionally it could also include other income from areas such as water, fishing rights, and customs collection. Initially, the grant was for a set period, usually a lifetime, and revocable at will by the emperor; nevertheless, since the reign of Michel VIII (r. 1259–1282), *pronoia* tended to be hereditary on a grand scale, by giving the good soldiers the possibility to leave their *pronoia* to their sons.

On the other hand, when a *pronoia* was granted to an institution (usually monasteries), it was prone to become perpetual, in so far as the institutions were ongoing. In any case, *pronoia* gave the grantee possession of the land, not ownership, which always remained imperial (that is why this type of state property is called *pronoiastika* in some documents). The legal status of the *pronoiaroi* has been under discussion among scholars until today. An imperial document called the *praktika* used legal terms for granting of the *pronoia*, as well as its limits and conditions, and the word *pronoia* could refer to the grant itself, its monetary value, or the income it produced.

Finally, there was state property conceded to private peasants in the form of leasing. This kind of state land (the "domain land") had a set of characteristics that differentiated it from the other types (*basilika* or *demosiaka* and *pronoiastika* or *stratiotika*). It could be given to an individual from the amount of tax imposed. There was no essential difference between the state tax and private rent. The state possessed an unlimited right of confiscation, even though the grantee could receive another piece of land at a just price, and it required an imperial confirmation to exploit the land as a property right. During the 10th and 11th centuries, another type of state exploitation of land appeared, the creation of charitable foundations by the emperor, generally associated with a monastery. The emperor provided the foundation with resources for its purposes and maintenance, including pieces of imperial land.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Feudalism; Fiscal System; Taxes; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I

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Taxes

Taxes were an essential part of Byzantine life. One could describe the Byzantine Empire as large machinery to collect taxes. It is understandable that, when Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) reconquered Italy for the empire, the Italian population missed the Ostrogothic regime, as the Byzantines turned out to be much more effective in collection of taxes in the country. The most critical section of the imperial administration throughout Byzantine history was that related to the significant function of collecting tax revenues. The Byzantine Empire developed the most advanced land-registration and fiscal-assessment system of the Middle Ages, as well as a highly qualified administration for it. Our knowledge about Byzantine types of taxation is based not only on the legislation preserved in different laws but also on some treatises of taxation that have

come down to us, which were a kind of manual for tax collectors composed in the 10th through 12th centuries. In any case, the type of taxation was diverse depending on the different regions and populations, though some general features are apparent.

Many scholars agree that the most crucial part of the Byzantine state's income until late in its existence derived from the land tax. The principal taxpayers in the empire were continuously the landowners. In the late Roman and the early Byzantine periods, the legislation of Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) established the principles of land taxation. They based it on three units of account: the amount of arability (suitability for agricultural production), quality of the land (iugum), and the amount of labor in human resources and animals (caput). According to a specific formula tying land and labor power, both units of account were interrelated (system of *capitatio-iugatio*). Cities and the land not exploited were not taxed directly by this method. The basis for levying the tax was a land survey and the preparation of a cadaster. The cadaster was a public registry where every identifiable piece of the land occupied a separate line, with the name of its owner (and taxpayer) and an indication of the land's fiscal burden and the amount of the tax payable at the right end of the line. The tax burden was reassessed periodically, every 5 years, then each 10 or 15. Also, the number of persons included in a *caput i*ncreased progressively (Cod. Theod. 11.3.2).

From the seventh or eighth centuries CE, several changes were introduced. State officials calculated a fixed revenue for each tax unit, and all the owners of the tax unit were jointly responsible for the payments due from the lands that belonged to it. Tax collection devolved for the most part upon imperial officials (*dioiketai*, *praktores*, *synetheiai*), but the state could also entrust it to the village community (*chorion*), or later to individuals, such as exempt landlords or businessmen who farmed out the fiscal revenue of a province after bidding at an auction.

In the middle Byzantine Empire, the connection between the land tax (*iugatio*) and the poll tax (*capitatio*) disappeared, and the land tax (*kanon*) was now assessed as a separate item and the personal tax (*kapnikon*) was charged to each farmer's household according to a fixed economic value. Additionally, there were regular taxes on domestic animals that produced income (*encomion*) in the form of the payment of money in return for grazing rights on land belonging to the state or the community. There were also many additional taxes connected with these, such as the *aerikon* (charged on animals as well), the *oikomodion* (payment to the state of a set quantity of grain on the part of each owner of land), and taxation on tenant farmers (*paroikiatikon*, *aktemonitikion*, *zeugaratikion*, *zeugologion*).

The regular taxation and charges on land were supplemented by a wide range of special levies and taxes and labor services (*angareia*), such as obligations to provide hospitality for soldiers and officials; maintain roads, bridges, and fortification; and deliver and/or to meet several requirements such as supplying charcoal or wood. Although theoretically these charges were light and only circumstantial, they might be a very difficult burden for taxpayers to bear. But, as if this were not enough, fiscal officials usually exacted extraordinary fees from taxpayers depending on their contract with the government, fees that appear to have multiplied from the 10th century

onward, as well as demands of hospitality (which they could commute for money). By the 11th century, these additional taxes and fees often outweighed the regular land tax.

Along with the land tax, other taxes existed in this period. One of the most significant was the *kommerkion*, a charge of 10 percent on merchandise that appeared around the year 800 CE. It was a circulation and sales tax, paid at customs, and was collected on all merchandise imported into the empire and on all merchandise reaching Constantinople by sea. In the early period, there were also taxes on immovable property (land and buildings) charged on urban dwellers, as well as city taxes (*vectigalia*) collected on local activities by city administrators (*curiales*), who were personally responsible for their collection. After the seventh century CE, when state officials started to administer the cities directly and the government financed them, these taxes disappeared.

The taxation changed from the 12th century onward, as the wealthy and powerful managed to extract tax exemptions for themselves and the state began to transform fiscal land into state land, so that the rents of the government as a landlord now became indistinguishable from taxation itself. Because of this, but also as the territory of the empire was decreasing, the land tax went into decline, and trade gained greater significance, even though it never provided the state with more revenues than agriculture.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Law; State Property; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: *Curiales*; *Key Events*: Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Theodosian Code

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Usury

Originally, usury (Latin *usur*a, Greek *tokolepsia*) meant a charge for the loan of a fungible, perishable, nonspecific good, whose use consisted of its consumption. Such a loan was called by the Romans *mutuum*. Money, considered to be "consumed" in the process of exchange for other goods, was classified as a fungible good. And as a money

loan became the most common form of loan of this type, usury came to signify a charge for the use of money. Only when the laws started to impose prohibitions of interest on loans and to set legal rates did usury assume its present meaning of a charge for a money loan that is excessive. In that ancient and medieval sense, usury was a controversial topic. Greek and Roman philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plutarch, etc.) considered interest contrary to the nature of things, as money is a barren thing, incapable of reproduction. Roman law considered the *mutuum* as a contract gratuitous in principle but allowed a clause (*stipulatio usurarum*) to be added to the bond for the paying of interest. Roman legislation was tolerant with the clause of interest but introduced some limits to the rates to be applied.

The topic was also disputed within the primitive church. Following Greek and Roman philosophy, the Fathers of the church did not have any positive attitude toward interest because they considered it contrary to the gospel precepts of charity and mercy and a cause of exploitation and oppression of the poor by the rich. Notwithstanding, no absolute ban of interest can be found in the Old Testament, just a prohibition for the Jews to take interest from another Jew, and an explicit prohibition of interest on loans to the poor (Exod. 22.25; Deut. 23.19, 20). Likewise, the New Testament is silent on the subject, or even is moderately tolerant at least to its practice in the parable of the Talents (Mt. 25.14–30). The official attitude of the church, nonetheless, was in general against the collection of interest of money from the fourth century onward. Ecclesiastical councils forbade the clergy to lend at interest (Council of Arles in 314 CE and the first Council of Nicaea in 325 CE) and declared it a reprehensible practice for laymen as well (e.g., Council of Carthage in 345 CE) and even totally by the general councils of Middle Ages to combat "the insatiable rapacity of usurers" (36th canon of the Council of Aix in 789 CE).

Despite this restrictive attitude of the official church, even after the declaration of Christianism as the official religion of the Empire by Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE), Roman law continued to allow the charging of interest on loans at a rate of 1 percent per month, that is, 12 percent per year (*centesimae usurae*). The legislation of Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE), nevertheless, under the influence of the concepts of the church, disapproved the taking of interest and tried to restrict it, although it did not completely prohibit it. The maximum rate of interest was set, as a rule, at 6 percent per year (Cod. Iust. 4.32.26). Yet a list of exceptions was laid down. Persons in charge of commercial establishments, for example, could take a maximum rate of 8 percent per year (*besses centesimae*). The same rate was set in the case of bankers (Nov. Iust. 136). In the case of maritime loans (whose rate of interest was previously unrestricted), the maximum was set at 12 percent per year. Conversely, for the *illustres* and those still higher in social rank, the limit was stricter (4 percent per year). In the case of farmers, when the loans were in kind (*specimen fenori dationes*), the rate of interest was set at 12 percent per year. But if they were in cash, the rate of interest could not exceed 4 percent per year (Nov. Iust. 32, ch. 1). In case of loans to the churches or charitable foundations, a maximum of 3 percent per year was fixed (Nov. Iust. 120).

The later Byzantine emperors tended to be more restrictive about usury. A lost provision of Nicephorus I (r. 802–811 CE) seemed to have introduced a prohibition on

charging interest altogether, but it is possible that it was restricted just to maritime loans, and, in any case, it was revoked very quickly. A more determined attempt to abolish interest was undertaken in the reign of Basil I (r. 867–886 CE). A legal compilation of ca. 872 CE (Procheiros Nomos 16.14) banned completely the charging of interest, without exceptions, as "unworthy of a Christian state." This compilation further declared that any interest paid was to be applied to the principal of the debt, though admitting as an exception the receipt of interest by orphans and minors. However, it is unclear if this legislation did really come into effect or simply remained as a draft. Be that as it may, the successor of Basil I, Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE), was obliged by the circumstances to recognize the legality of interest as a "necessary evil." Taking into account "the weakness of the human nature" and the economic problems that a total prohibition of interest for loans caused, he admitted its payment, yet he set an annual rate of 4 percent (Nov. Leon. 83). This accepting attitude was continued by the successors of Leo VI, such as Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE), who imposed a "lawful interest" upon those who delayed in their exercise of the right of *protimesis* (preemption) in favor of the purchaser. In the late Byzantine period, the situation continued unaltered, as recorded in later works such as the *Syntagma Canonum* of Mathew Blastares (1335) and the *Hexabiblos* of Constantinos Harmenopoulos (1345).

Byzantine society had thus an ambivalent attitude toward usury, ranging between a severe critic from the level of the moral principles and a comprehensive approach from a practical, economic point of view.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; Ecumenical Church Councils; *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Individuals*: Justinian; Lecapenus, Romanus I; *Key Events*: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*; Nicaea, Council of

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Weights

Throughout most of the Byzantine period, a duodecimal system was employed as the metrological one. The ordinary units used for measurement of weight and mass were mostly inherited from the Romans. The reconstruction of the weight system is based on a legislation of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) in 309 CE, which introduced a new coin, the *solidus* (or *nomisma*), a piece of gold of 4.55 grams, which was to retain its weight and fineness well into the 10th century. The basic unit of the system was, however, the Byzantine pound (*litra*), derived from the late Roman pound. In Constantine′s monetary system, a *litra* was divisible into 72 *solidi*, thus giving a theoretical weight for the late Roman/early Byzantine pound of 327.60 grams. This is nevertheless something controversial, as it is clear the weight of the *solidus*, and consequently of the *litra*, fluctuated along the times (between 324 grams in the 4th century up to 319 grams in the 13th century, and even less thereafter), and that the weight of the *litra* was probably different between Constantinople and the provinces, so that the provincial *solidi* were some 12 percent lighter than in the capital. Anyway, in the time of Constantine (r. 306–337) and later, the *litra* was divided into 12 ounces (*ouggia* = 27.3 grams, equivalent to six *solidi*), and the ounce itself into 12 *semisseis* (2.27 grams) and in 24 *scripula* (*grammai* o *tremisseis* = 1.55 grams), the smallest unit of the libral system. Byzantine weights were either commercial, in which case they were denominated in pounds, ounces, and their fractions, or coin weights, which were denominated in *nomismata* or *solidi*.

Model weights were made in lead, bronze, and glass, and occasionally in gold and silver. Though the glass weights had numerous advantages in manufacture and use, they seem to have disappeared during the 7th century because of the contraction of the economy in that period, the disruption of the administrative system for their manufacture and distribution, and after the loss of the key imperial provinces of Syrian and Egypt. The weights came in various styles. There were especially two main types: bust or statuette weights (depicting usually an empress or, less frequently, an emperor) for gross weighting with steelyards, and flat weights for fine weighting with balance scales. Most of the latter were flat and square, though some took the form of a flattened sphere, in solid bronze, and marked with an omicron/upsilon date from the early 3rd to late 5th centuries. Normally they were stored in weight boxes, low rectangular containers (approximately 20 centimeters long) of wood (sometimes with copper or ivory panels with floral or geometric motifs, frequently bearing the inscription "Grace of God" to indicate honest weighting as a gift from God), many of them surviving in Egypt. The flat weights were replaced by cubes marked with a gamma/omicron over the 4th century, and these were in turn replaced by discs until at least the early 9th century and possibly the 12th. All bore a weight designation (*exagia* for coins, *pondera* for commodities), and some bore texts, symbols (especially the cross from the 5th through 7th centuries), or images (emperors), names of officials (emperor, prefect or eparch, proconsul or *anthypatos*, *comes sacrarum largitionum*),

Steelyard weights were hooked on a balancing beam ("steelyard") as a counterweight to the merchandise being weighed. They often took the form of empresses or emperors, as in this example. They usually were inscribed with specific weights to avoid merchants defrauding their customers—a practice Byzantines saw as sinful and offensive to God. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

and pious phrases, references to justice, and invocations. Generally, the designs were engraved or punched.

The administration of weights and measures involved a good number of officials. A law of Valentinian II, Theodosius I, and Arcadius (Cod. Theod. 12.6.21, 388 nov 28), following on from a law of Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius I (Cod. Theod. 12.6.20), instructed the praetorian prefect to ensure that official measures and weights should be kept in each post station (*mansio*) and city (*civitas*) to enable taxpayers to know that they were paying the correct amount. Under Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE), the praetorian prefect and the eparch of Constantinople, as well as the *comes sacrarum largitionum* (a minister of finance), were responsible for weights. In a law of 534 CE (Nov. Iustin. 128, ch. 15), Justinian allowed the taxpayers permission to receive from the prefects weights and measures for commodities and from the *comes sacrarum largitionum* weights of gold, silver, and other metals. These weights were to be kept in the most holy church of each city. For Italy, Justinian instructed commodities or coins to be traded in the measures and weights he had delivered "into the presence of the Most Blessed Pope or of the Most Distinguished Senate." This role of the church in the matter of weights and measures also existed in the East where, for example, John the Almsgiver, on his consecration as patriarch of Alexandria in 610 CE, promulgated a public edict forbidding the use of weights, measures, or balances not conforming to the standard. Eventually the importance of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* seems to have decreased considerably, and his responsibilities were assumed by the eparch of the city. During the sixth and seventh centuries, this official was responsible for the issuance of glass weights, and by the ninth century he controlled all forms of weights and measures in the capital (*Book of the Eparch*, ch. 6, 13, 16, 18). In the provinces, at the same time, other officials also had authority on weights. In the western part of

the empire, these included proconsuls, *viri laudabiles*, and *viri clarissimi*; in the East, *anthypatoi*, *comites*, and *ephoroi*.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Judge, Justice; Law; Province; Taxes; *Individuals*: Arcadius; Constantine the Great; Diocletian; Justinian; *Key Events*: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*; *Objects and Artifacts*: Gold Solidus of Justinian I

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Writing

Writing was one of the essential features of Byzantine civilization. Contrary to classical Rome, where many of the main legal transactions maintained their original oral character, in Byzantium, as in the ancient Greek law, writing was substantial, so that the validity of the legal act could depend on the fulfillment of the written requirements. Letters, literacy, and literature in Byzantium also had a prominent role in that society, but writing's significance was above all in the juridical domain.

Normally documents were written on papyrus, parchment, or paper in colored ink. The transition from parchment to paper as the preferred writing surface happened slowly in the Byzantine Empire. Paper may have reached Byzantium as early as the 9th century, when a tax called *chartika* was introduced, and there are also references to "paper makers" (*chartopoioi*) in the first quarter of that century. But it is in the 11th century when paper documents start to be produced massively. During the 13th century parchment had a kind of revival, but in the following century paper dominated once more.

Documents of a formal nature varied according to their author and the nature and importance of the question they concerned. According to their producers, they could

be classified as secular or sacred, or according to their means of preservation (the originals, imitations, or simple copies).

The secular documents were either imperial or private ones. The imperial chancery issued many types of documents, which were divided into those that promulgated law (e.g., *edikton*, *pragmatikos typos*, *thespisma*, *neara* or *novella*, *sakrai*, *mandata*), present decisions regarding specific cases (as simple letter, *epistula sakra*, or as a type of subscription, *lysis* or *semeiosis*), documents of foreign policy (treaties, diplomatic letters: *sakrai grammata*, *basilikon*, *prokouratorika*), and administrative documents (*prostagmata, horismoi, sigillia, codicilli*). The most remarkable of these imperial documents were *chrysobulls* (*chrysoboulla*), a generic name for types of documents that took the emperor´s gold bulla and were signed by the emperor with purple ink; later, the name was used to indicate solemn documents, even those without such a bulla. The most splendid among these *chrysobulls* was the *chrysoboullos logos*, a document in epistolary form rubricated three times by the imperial word and with the signature of the emperor, a kind of formal communication used for solemn granting of privileges, for communicating important administrative decisions, or for publishing new laws. Other *chrysobulls* (*sigillon*, *horkomotikon*, *prokouratorikon*) were used for communicating lesser privileges, confirmation of treatises, safe conducts, appointments of representatives, etc. Most imperial acts contained certain fixed parts. At the beginning (*protocol*) there was an invocation (usually to the Holy Trinity); the *intitulatio* (name and titles of the emperor); eventually indication of the addressees; and the date. At the very end (*eschatocol*) appeared the date in which the document was written (*egraphe*) or issued by the emperor (*apelythe*), expressed according to one of the several chronologies in use. In the body of the document was a *prooimion* (*arenga*), a rhetorical introduction with philosophical or political considerations; then the description of the facts that motivated the act (*narratio*); thereafter the decision, arrangement, or order (*dispositio*); and finally, eventual spiritual or temporal sanctions for opponents, and other special clauses when needed.

Private documents were produced by individuals without state authority, whose probatory value (providing proof or evidence) depended on several circumstances. Among the most valuable private documents were the notarial acts, namely those that were made out and signed by a notary. The predominant characteristic of these documents in Byzantium was that they were written in the first person by the party who proceeded to the agreement. At the beginning was placed his signature. The text began usually with an invocation to the Holy Trinity. Then a lot of highly developed and elaborate legal formulas followed, to preserve the free will and intention of the contracting parties. These clauses were formulated in a variety of expressions that became increasingly complex from the period of the late Roman Empire onward. At the end, witnesses were to sign the document before the signature of the notary (*completio*), together with that of the scribe and the accountant. After Constantinople fell to the Crusaders in 1204, substantial changes occurred in the form of the notarial acts. The new element introduced by Latin notaries was the drafting of the acts, not in the first person, namely in the name of the party proceeding into the transaction, but in the third person, that of the notary. It gave the notary the special authority of a "public

officer." The Roman-Byzantine style was only occasionally maintained. All kinds of private documents have survived: wills, deeds confirming sales, exchanges, donations, documents offering guarantees or making special agreements, etc.

The sacred documents were the writings and official letters issued by the patriarchal chancery and by other ecclesiastical dignities (especially bishops). Typical of this kind of document, besides the sealed letters (*grammmata*), were the *homologiai* (creeds), *diathekai* (testaments), *aphorismoi* (excommunications), and *paraiteseis* (abdications), as well as the ceremonial practice (*synodike*), the resolutions of a synod (*hypotyposis*), and dogmatic edicts (*tomos*). The documents the patriarchal chancery used presented similar parts as the imperial acts.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Notarius*; *Organization and Administration*: Judge, Justice; Taxes; *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade

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Individuals

OVERVIEW ESSAY

Biography and Byzantine Chronology

This section provides a biographical gateway to the Byzantine Empire in its early and middle phases. The early empire stretches from the age of Diocletian and Constantine in the 4th century through the era of Justinian in the 6th century, while the middle period moves from the cataclysmic 7th century through the empire's recovery and apex of power under the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056 CE) to the emergence of a new period of trouble at the end of the 12th century. The section places an emphasis on the foundational early period through 22 entries and introduces the middle period through 8 entries. This section does not address the late Byzantine Empire, which began with the end of the Comnenus Dynasty in 1185 and the disaster of the Fourth Crusade soon thereafter, and concluded with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, bringing the Byzantine Empire to an end.

The Imperial Center

The entries in this section emphasize the centrality of the imperial household through 18 entries, 15 of which address imperial men and 3 that focus on imperial women. The latter includes two empresses: Theodora in the sixth century, wife of Emperor Justinian and the most popularly known empress in Byzantine history, and Irene in the late eighth century, who ruled in her own name. The last woman included is Anna Comnena (1083–1153), daughter of Emperor Alexius Comnenus and historian of his reign, who expected to become an empress herself only to have her hopes dashed when the throne was passed to her brother, John Comnenus, instead of her husband. This selection reflects the historical significance of the imperial office as well as Byzantine historical texts, which largely emphasize the centrality of the emperor above all.

Foundations of Byzantium

These imperial entries begin with Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE), whose remarkable reign witnessed the restoration of order after the "crisis" of the third century, when the empire endured chronic civil war, collapsing frontiers against Germanic and Persian assaults, separatist movements in the west and east, and the double trauma of epidemic disease and famine. Diocletian resurrected imperial power from its nadir. The emperor

brought the civil wars to an end, stamped out the separatist movements in Western Europe and the Levant, stabilized the empire's frontiers, and set about reforming and vastly expanding the size of the civil administration and the military. Through this work, Diocletian resuscitated the vitality of the empire. Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) built on this foundation, after dismantling the tetrarchic system of rule that Diocletian had established, and restored dynastic control. Constantine continued his predecessor's reforms, sometimes making it difficult for historians to ascertain whether the source of a particular change was Diocletian or Constantine. For some reforms, however, there was no doubt. Constantine created a stable gold currency, the famed *solidus*, which would reign supreme in the Mediterranean world for centuries. He became the patron of the church, transforming Christianity from a persecuted minority to a religion of wealth and political power, merging imperial ideology with Christianity. For this momentous cultural and political change, Constantine became one of the few emperors deemed worthy of sainthood, despite his violent tendencies. Constantine in 330 CE also built Constantinople, which became the Byzantine imperial capital for more than a millennium. In fact, Constantinople plays a part in every entry in this section, except for Diocletian's, whose reign was prior to the city's construction. Constantine's dynasty lasted until 363 CE, continuing the development of Constantinople as an imperial center and the promotion of Christianity, with the exception of the brief rule of Emperor Julian (r. 361–363 CE), who struggled in vain to restore traditional religion to its place of honor.

Fifth and Sixth Centuries

The fifth century presented the enormous challenge of Hunnic assaults and increasing Germanic power against which the empire in the east was weakened and the West succumbed entirely. The imperial government in Constantinople succeeded in effectively weathering the storm, fortifying the imperial capital with massive walls during the reign of Theodosius II (r. 408–451 CE) and, in the second half of the fifth century, using Isaurian troops from the mountains of Anatolia to offset the influence of German troops from beyond the empire's borders. By century's end, the empire again had stable frontiers and a full treasury, which, in the sixth century, Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) used for the reconquest of much of the empire's lost western territory. Justinian also manifested his imperial grandeur in stone, by building or restoring fortresses, bridges, cisterns, aqueducts, baths, and churches throughout the empire, including the most celebrated work of architecture in all of Byzantine history: Hagia Sophia. In addition to his conquests and constructions, Justinian's legacy was further boosted by his equally momentous codification of Roman law in the Justinian Code. Despite the splendor of his reign, emperors after Justinian struggled to live up to his model, to maintain his new territories in the west, to defend the empire against another wave of attacks by powerful nomadic peoples from the steppe, and to solve increasing financial problems. The recurring challenges deteriorated into a military revolt that, for the first time, succeeded in overthrowing a reigning emperor in Constantinople.

Struggle and Recovery

In 602 CE, a rebellious junior military commander in the army led a revolt against Emperor Maurice, whom he executed along with his children. This event marked the first time in Byzantine history that a reigning emperor in Constantinople was deposed, and it foreshadowed the disasters ahead in the seventh century. This period witnessed a colossal war with the Persian Empire (602–629 CE), which coincided with the emergence of Islam and then the birth of an Arab empire that destroyed the Persian Empire and deprived Byzantium of its wealthiest territories, from Syria southward to Egypt and westward across North Africa. The Mediterranean Sea, which the Romans had once confidently referred to as "Our Sea," became a contested frontier zone with all Byzantine coastal territory in imminent threat. The empire was now fighting for its life against a much larger and wealthier state, affording the Bulgars and Slavs the opportunity to establish themselves permanently in the Balkans. The seventh century marked the transition from the early to the middle Byzantine period, and the imperial government and army transformed into a smaller, more streamlined administrative and organizational structure.

The empire was then fighting for its very existence. Constantinople was twice besieged by Arab armies, and imperial power was challenged as much by rival generals as by foreign enemies. The tide slowly began to turn in the eighth century, beginning with Emperor Leo III, who repulsed the great Arab siege of 717–718 CE and established a new dynasty, the Isaurian or Syrian Dynasty, which would last the century. Leo strengthened the state through military victory and supported a new religious policy known as Iconoclasm, which sought to eliminate religious portraits from both the public and private spheres. *Imperial* portraits and images, on the other hand, were wholly acceptable. In the ninth century CE, Iconoclasm as a religious policy was rejected by both church and emperors, but imperial power had been successfully restored and was to be greatly enhanced in the following centuries. The latter development is highlighted by entries on the missionary and diplomatic activity in the 9th and 10th centuries CE (*see* Liudprand of Cremona; Methodius and Cyril, Apostles to the Slavs; Lecapenus, Romanus I).

New Challenges: From Middle to Late Byzantium

This upward trend of Byzantine power and prosperity came to end in the later 11th century, due to shortsighted political policies following the death of Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE) and the arrival of new enemies at every frontier: the Catholic Normans in southern Italy and Sicily, who set their sights on the Balkans and Constantinople; nomadic peoples (Pechenegs and Cumans) from the steppe, who crossed the Danube River and attacked the Balkans; and the Seljuq Turks in the east, who defeated the Byzantine army at Manzikert in 1071 and began the Turkish migration into Anatolia. It was at this dire time that Emperor Alexius Comnenus emerged, like Diocletian, to bring victory out of defeat and restore the empire. Alexius established the Comnenus Dynasty (1081–1185) that significantly restructured the way the empire was governed and ensured stability and prosperity for another century.

The end of the Comnenus Dynasty was the turning point from the middle to the late Byzantine period, which is not covered in this section. This was a period of unraveling. The end of the Comnenus Dynasty led to the Fourth Crusade, when Western Crusaders conquered Constantinople in 1204 and divided the empire as spoils of war. The capital was recovered in 1261 by Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus, who founded the empire's final dynasty, the Palaeologus Dynasty (1259–1453), which ruled until the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, when the empire was brought to its end. Yet, Ottoman sultans continued to draw on this grand imperial tradition and made Constantinople once again the capital of an empire that spanned three continents.

The Ecclesiastical Impact

The next largest segment of entries emphasizes the role of the bishop in Byzantine history and society. Eight bishops, from the 4th to the 10th century, are presented. Three of these were bishops of Constantinople, and each was deposed or forced out of power, revealing the precarious position of bishops at the center of power, torn asunder by imperial interests (John Chrystostom), competing theological factions (Nestorius), and the jealousy of rival clerics (Gregory of Nazianzus; John Chrysostom). Other bishops were pivotal in the development of Christian literature and in the shaping of Orthodox theology (Basil of Caesarea; Athanasius of Alexandria) or as diplomatic voices negotiating the relationship between East and West (Pope Gregory the Great in the late 6th century; Bishop Liudprand of Cremona in the 10th century). Finally, the brothers Cyril and Methodius, only the latter of whom became a bishop, demonstrated the missionary activity of the Byzantine state and its long-lived cultural impact on Slavic peoples.

Elite Voices

The last group of entries offers an entryway for exploring the role of other powerful and influential individuals in shaping Byzantine history: high officeholders (Rufinus), celebrated generals (Belisarius and Narses), and historians (Sozomen; Procopius). These categories also overlap with the imperial office. There were officials (Anastasius) and generals (Maurice; Leo III) who became emperors, and members of the imperial family who also became historians (Anna Comnena).

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Anastasius, Flavius (r. 491–518 CE)

Anastasius was a Roman emperor from 491–518 CE. When Emperor Zeno died, his widow, Ariadne, who was the daughter of Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474 CE) chose as his successor the chamberlain, Anastasius, a cultured man, more than sixty years of age, whom she married.

The fifth century was marked by two recurring challenges: Germanic migrations and Christian theological disputes. Germanic tribes and tribal confederations assumed control over most of the western territories of the Roman Empire, which had been weakened by the onslaught of the Huns. The political map of the West was transformed by the Angles, Saxons, Visigoths, Burgundians, Alamanni, Vandals, Ostrogoths, and yet other groups, as the late Roman Empire morphed into the early Middle Ages. Little remained of the Roman Empire in the West outside of Italy, and even that was a struggle to preserve. The Roman Empire in the East survived this challenge by using Isaurian soldiers against Germans and maintained its territorial and political integrity thanks to strong leadership from Constantinople though the reigns of Marcian (r. 450–457 CE), Leo, and the Isaurian Zeno (r. 474–491 CE), whose reign witnessed the final loss of imperial control in Italy. Zeno played off Germanic competitors and invited Theoderic the Amal and his Ostrogoths to invade Italy. This departure removed the Ostrogothic threat from the Balkans, while punishing the German upstart, Odoacer, who had deposed the last Roman emperor in Italy.

Christology was the theological study of the human and divine natures of Christ, and it tore the church apart. Some theologians, particularly those from Alexandria, argued that the divine nature absorbed the human so that it was possible to speak of one nature in Christ, a position called Monophysite ("one nature"). In 451 CE , Emperor Marcian summoned the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon, which condemned Monophysite theology that defined Christ as from two natures and in two natures (truly human and truly divine), but with a unity nonetheless, without division or separation. The Western church embraced Chalcedon, but much of Egypt and Syria, along

with Armenia and Ethiopia, rejected it. This created the first major schism in the Christian world, that between Monophysite and the Chalcedonian or Dyophysite ("two nature") theologies. A foremost challenge of the imperial office would be to find a way to keep the West (Rome) and the East (Antioch and Alexandria) united with Constantinople. In 482 CE, Emperor Zeno issued the *Henoticon* ("Edict of Union"), which affirmed the Third Ecumenical Council, which denounced Nestorianism, but not the Fourth, and the edict condemned the most extreme position, hoping that by condemning the extremes, while not making any definitive declaration on the nature, that a moderate position would bring the empire together. It did not and instead led to a schism between Constantinople and Rome, known as the Acacian Schism, named after the Patriarch of Constantinople, Acacius (r. 471–489 CE). When Anastasius I (r. 491–518) became the new emperor in 491 CE, Bishop Euphemius of Constantinople was suspicious of his theological leanings and made him sign a contract to accept the Council of Chalcedon before he would agree to crown him emperor. Yet, upon taking office, Anastasius left the *Henoticon* in place.

The security of Anastasius's hold on the throne was in some doubt as long as Longinus, the brother of Emperor Zeno, was operating in Constantinople. Longinus was a fan favorite with the circus factions, the Blues and the Greens, whereas Anastasius was disinterested in such public entertainment. The emperor accused Longinus of stirring up a riot in the Hippodrome and exiled him. He also purged the city of Isaurians, whose ties of loyalty to the emperor were weaker than to their fellow Isaurian, Longinus. Faced with the loss of influence, Longinus and the Isaurians revolted but were defeated. This ended the period of Isaurian predominance in the Byzantine military.

Anastasius was a dedicated and effective manager of the imperial government. He reduced spending, wherever possible, and made important changes to the empire's fiscal administration. First, he changed the form of tax collection from payments in kind to payments in gold, which improved efficiency in the collection and transfer of tax payments. He likewise eliminated the state's in-kind provision of arms, clothing, and food to troops and in their place provided a cash allowance for soldiers to furnish their own needs. Anastasius also instituted a new copper coin, the *follis*, which was minted in 201 CE. The *follis* was extremely useful for daily purchases, with one *follis* purchasing a loaf of bread, and remained in use for centuries. Anastasius created a new official, the *vindex civitatis* ("defender of the city"), who ensured integrity of tax collection by local city councils, and eliminated one tax, the *chrysargyron*, which Constantine had instituted, that fell on city dwellers. Anastasius's careful management and sound fiscal policies were very successful for the financial health of the empire and filled the treasury with some 320,000 pounds of gold by the end of his reign.

In his foreign policy, Anastasius kept peace with the West. He formally recognized Theodoric the Ostrogoth's rule in Italy and engaged in diplomacy with other Germanic tribes, including the Franks and Burgundians. The empire's northern frontier was challenged by the Bulgars, who made their first appearance in Byzantine history in 493 CE and would remain part of it for the next millennium. The Persian frontier, which had been peaceful since the reign of Theodosius II (ca. 408–450 CE), erupted in 502 CE over a dispute about control of the formerly Byzantine city of Nisibis. Peace was restored by

Emperor Anastasius ruled from 491 to 518 CE and prudently guided the empire by instituting effective political and economic measures that paved the way for his successors, emperors Justin I and Justinian I. This image presents Anastasius as consul, whose duty involved putting on games for the people of Constantinople. While such games were popular, they could also lead to violence and rioting by unruly fans. (DeAgostini/Getty Images)

506 CE, and Anastasius strengthened the Byzantine defenses at the frontier with fortifications at Dara and many other frontier locations. Anastasius also built, or enhanced, a fortification known as the Long Wall, which was 40 miles to the west of Constantinople and provided a defensive barrier against the Bulgars and other invaders trying to make their way to the capital.

In his religious policy, Anastasius progressively revealed his non-Chacedonian, Monophysite leaning. As has been noted, the emperor continued Zeno's *Henoticon* and, thus, sustained the schism with Rome that had begun in 482 CE. When Patriarch Euphemius of Constantinople desired to negotiate with Rome for an end to the schism, he was deposed in 496 CE and a new patriarch was appointed who, while still a Chalcedonian, was willing to tolerate the *Henoticon*. As the emperor began his third decade in power, he became openly supportive of Monophysite theology. In 511 CE, he deposed the pro-Chalcedonian bishop of Constantinople and replaced him with a Monophysite cleric, who incorporated this theological position into the liturgy at Hagia Sophia by adding to the *Trisagion* chant ("Holy, holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts") the phrase "who was crucified for us." Anastasius also appointed the Monophysite monk Severus as Patriarch of Antioch. These changes triggered rioting in the city, where pro-Chalcedon advocates united with Blues and Greens in a failed attempt to depose Anastasius.

The religious division also fomented an open rebellion, when Vitalian, the Count of Federate Troops in Thrace, revolted in 514 CE. He was a Chalcedonian and the godson of the deposed Chalcedonian bishop of Antioch, whom Severus replaced. His aim was to pressure Anastasius to the negotiating table with the bishop of Rome and to restore a pro-Chalcedonian policy, but he was defeated in 515 CE.

Anastasius's reign witnessed frequent rioting, stemming from fans of the chariot teams, the Blues and the Greens, which regularly required suppression by imperial

troops. The Blues and Greens were prone to violence, but they did not have any specific or permanent religious, political, or economic agenda. Yet, the violence was escalating and reached its peak during the reign of Anastasius's near successor, Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE).

In 518 CE, at 88 years of age, Anastasius died. His effective reign had strengthened the empire and left a full treasury for his successors, who would exploit it for grand building projects and military campaigns. Anastasius had three nephews but named no heir. Stepping into this vacuum was Justin, commander of the palace guard unit of the Excubitors. Justin's reign (r. 518–527 CE) marked the opening salvo of the age of Justinian, whose reign directly benefited from Anastasius's frontier defenses and prudent fiscal policies.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Individuals*: Leo III, the Isaurian; Theodosius II; Zeno; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Persians; *Key Events*: Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Rome, Fall of; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus

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Arcadius (r. 395–408 CE)

Arcadius was a Roman emperor from 395 to 408. He was the son of Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395), the brother of Emperor Honorius I (r. 395–423), and the father of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450).

Emperor Theodosius I married his first wife, Aelia Flaccilla, around 376 CE, with whom he had two sons, Arcadius and Honorius. She died around 385 and received universal praise for her piety and philanthropy. When Theodosius I died in Milan in 395 CE, he had arranged for each son to rule half the empire, the adolescent Honorius in the West and the teenage Arcadius in the East at Constantinople. Neither emperor had any military experience, and each was left with a primary caretaker to protect his interests and defend the empire. In the West, powerful general and Master of Soldiers (*Magister Militum*) Stilicho watched over Honorius, and in the East, Praetorian Prefect Rufinus did the same for Arcadius. Emperor Theodosius failed to foresee that quarrels would erupt between these regents. The strife began at Theodosius's deathbed, when Stilicho believed that it was the emperor's intention for him to look after both emperors, viewing Rufinus as a usurper of this authority.

The quarrel hampered the empire's defense against the Visigoths, whose commander, Alaric, was frustrated that he had not been appointed as master of soldiers. He expressed his feeling by rampaging up to the suburbs of Constantinople. Rufinus managed to persuade Alaric to depart from the capital, but he simply channeled his anger toward Greece. Stilicho mobilized a defense against Alaric, but Rufinus feared the potential consequences for him personally and had Emperor Arcadius order Stilicho to return to the West, since he was on territory under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. The order also required that Stilicho return troops that Emperor Theodosius had left in the West after suppressing the rebellion of Eugenius. As ordered, the master of the soldiers withdrew and sent the requested troops to Constantinople, under the command of a loyal Visigoth named Gainas, who arranged the assassination of Rufinus.

Influence at court now fell to the head chamberlain and eunuch, Eutropius, who had previously blocked Rufinus's attempt to marry his own daughter to Emperor Arcadius, who married instead Eudoxia, the strong-willed and attractive daughter of a German general. This palace soap opera offered no solace to the Balkans, where Alaric continued his assaults on Greece, raiding and pillaging unfettered. In 397 CE, Stilicho again marshaled the defense but was a second time ordered by Arcadius, now under Eutropius's influence, to withdraw. Eutropius operated under the same fear as Rufinus, namely, that Stilicho would defeat Alaric and then move on Constantinople. To hasten the general's withdrawal, Eutropius stirred a revolt in North Africa, which occupied Stilicho's attention.

Apart from the events, Eutropius proved a capable adviser for the emperor. When Nectarius, the patriarch of Constantinople, died in September 397 CE, Emperor Arcadius, acting under the influence of his chief adviser, summoned the famed orator and priest John Chrysostom from Antioch. John was consecrated as the new patriarch of Constantinople (r. 397–404 CE). Eutropius also took up arms in defense of the empire, defeating the Huns and receiving the consulship in 399 CE, the first eunuch to ever win this honor.

When Goths in Anatolia rebelled, Eutropius ordered Gainas to lead the suppression. Instead, he made common cause with them. Gainas hated Eutropius, whom he viewed as standing in the way of his aggrandizement of power, and issued demands to the imperial government, including the arrest of Eutropius, to which Arcadius agreed. In fear, Eutropius fled to Bishop John Chrysostom and received a brief reprieve but was later arrested and executed. Gainas's demands and influence increased. The emperor appointed him master of soldiers, granted him authority to nominate officials, and awarded him the consulship. In 400 CE, the general moved troops into the capital to secure his hold, but when he asked for an Arian church, the bishop refused. This theological friction and the presence of so many German troops in the city strained tensions to the breaking point. To defuse the situation, Gainas transferred troops out of the city, but this reduction triggered a popular reaction and a massacre of the remaining soldiers. In the turmoil, Gainas fled, but was soon killed by Huns. This affair demonstrated that Germans would not take control over the East to the extent that they held sway in the West. In addition, late in 401 CE, Alaric led his Visigoths west and freed Arcadius and Constantinople from facing this direct threat.

After the fall of Eutropius, political power rested in the hands of Arcadius's wife, Eudoxia, but just as a reprieve from tension with the Germans appeared, a new controversy emerged within the city. There was considerable enmity between empress and patriarch. This was sparked when John defended a widow, whose property the empress had appropriated, and then referred in a sermon to the wicked activities of the biblical Queen Jezebel, which was popularly viewed as an allusion to the empress. John's rivals and enemies began advocating against him to the imperial court, with the empress amenable to such antagonism. The drama escalated when John provided asylum to Egyptian monks, known as the "Long Brothers," who were accused of harboring heretical views. The fact that John appeared to intervene in the jurisdiction of another bishop provided Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, with an opportunity to take direct action against John. Theophilus had opposed John's appointment in 397 CE and wanted to assert the influence and power of Alexandria over that of the upstart city, Constantinople.

Theophilus arrived in the capital in 403 CE. He ignored the usual protocol of paying respects to the city's bishop and was lodged in an imperial residence outside Constantinople, where he secured ties with John's enemies. Arcadius acquiesced to Theophilus's plan to summon an ecclesiastical synod. Known as the Synod of the Oak, this tribunal, composed mostly of Egyptian bishops, indicted John of more than two dozen charges, but Patriarch John defiantly refused the summons to appear. He was deposed *in absentia* and the synod's decision was reported to the emperor for action to be taken.

The city's populace rallied in defense of their bishop. Crowds surrounded Hagia Sophia, preventing imperial efforts to arrest him, and the bishop continued to assert his influence through preaching. As tensions increased, John opted to surrender and was quietly escorted out of the city, even as he protested the judgment against him. The public realization of what happened stirred turmoil. Triumphant monks took hold of Hagia Sophia and were ousted by imperial troops, while the palace hesitated in its next decision. These doubts were exacerbated by seismic activity, perceived as a divine message. John was recalled to a cheering crowd and a new, larger synod was summoned to review the previous decision, which it overruled. John remained the city's patriarch.

Yet, this honeymoon did not last long. Their relationship deteriorated further when John condemned loud public entertainments associated with the dedication of a statue of the empress and later made a sermon reference to Herodias raging and seeking the head of John the Baptist, which was again interpreted as an allusion to Eudoxia. Less than two months after his return, the imperial family refused to attend Christmas service in Hagia Sophia, claiming that John's position as patriarch was in question. This tense atmosphere dragged on for several months, with each side mobilizing allied ecclesiastical resources. Finally, in Holy Week, the emperor ordered John to resign, but he refused. On Easter Sunday, while clergy loyal to John were baptizing Christians, several hundred soldiers violently stormed the area, thoroughly disrupting activity and manifesting the kind of violence that was to come. This highly tense situation dragged on for another month, with John protected by crowds and even

surviving an assassination attempt. Finally, John's ecclesiastical opponents pressured Arcadius to resolve the situation. On June 9, 404 CE, the emperor ordered the patriarch into exile. John surrendered to avoid bloodshed and was taken out of the city, which soon witnessed major rioting, with the cathedral and Senate house set in flames. Later that same year, Eudoxia died of a miscarriage.

Power now passed to a new figure, Praetorian Prefect Anthemius, who selected a new patriarch and began the process of reconciling the church after the deposition of John Chrysostom, as well as repairing the damaged city. The second foundation of Hagia Sophia would now be built, surviving until its destruction in the fire of 532 CE, after which the third and final church would be built by Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE).

Arcadius died in 408 CE and passed power to his seven-year-old son, Theodosius II, with Anthemius continuing to hold the reigns of state.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Patriarchs; *Individuals*: Chrysostom, John; Justinian; Rufinus; Theodosius II; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (328–373 CE)

Athanasius was the Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt from 328 CE until his death in 373 CE. His life was entwined with many of the central aspects of ecclesiastical and political history of the fourth century, which marked the transition of the Roman Empire from pagan to Christian and the emergence of bishops as major power brokers in the empire. Athanasius was an indefatigable opponent of Arian Christian theology, which originated in Alexandria, and a defender of the theology established at the Council of Nicaea (the first ecumenical council of the Christian Church) in 325 CE. His episcopal tenure was marked by five periods of exile, totaling more than 17 years, which was ordered by four different emperors—Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), Constantius (r. 337–361 CE), Julian (r. 361–363 CE), and Valens (r. 364–378 CE)—who witnessed his triumphal return after each one. Athanasius was also the author of works of profound influence, including his theological treaties and the first biography of a monk, the *Life of Antony*, which established the model for hagiography thereafter.

Born in Alexandria around 295 CE, Athanasius was ordained a deacon in 319 CE by Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, whose secretary he became, even accompanying the bishop to the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, where Arian theology was denounced. On the death of Alexander in 328 CE, Athanasius became his successor.

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, occupied one of the most prestigious episcopal sees in the Roman Empire. He is considered one of the greatest fathers of the Christian Church. He was perhaps the greatest supporter of Nicene Christianity and the greatest opponent of the heretical Christological beliefs of Arianism. He is best remembered for his biography of the great desert father Saint Anthony, the *Vita s. Antonii*. (Ivan Vdovin/Getty Images)

As bishop, Athanasius traveled around Egypt, forging strong links with churches and monastic communities throughout his jurisdiction. As his status and influence in the church of Egypt increased, he faced plots by ecclesiastical and theological rivals, who accused him of murder, a charge that was proved groundless, and later summoned him to face additional charges, including financial misappropriations and violence, at the Synod of Tyre in 335 CE. The synod witnessed open hostility and violence between the supporters of Athanasius and his opponents, and ultimately found him guilty and deposed his as bishop. Unwilling to accept this condemnation by his enemies, Athanasius appealed directly to Emperor Constantine, who was initially supportive, but when his enemies also accused Athanasius of threatening the food supply of Constantinople, which was fed by Egyptian grain, the emperor ordered Athanasius exiled to the West, to the city of Trier in Gaul. It was in this period of exile that Athanasius wrote *Against the Pagans* and his powerful treatise, *On the Incarnation*, where he explained that God was made human so that humanity could be become God. Athanasius also cultivated relationships with church leaders in the West and maintained ties with supporters in the East. Upon the death of Constantine in 337 CE, the emperor's sons allowed the exiled bishop to return to Alexandria, where he found a cheering crowd.

In 339 CE, Emperor Constantius who accepted Arian theology, deposed Athanasius. The bishop made his way to Rome, where he secured the support of Pope Julius I and the protection of Constantius's brother, Emperor Constans (r. 337–350 CE), who ruled the western portion of the empire. Here, Athanasius composed his polemical theological *Orations against the Arians*. Emperor Constans, who embraced the Nicene theology of Athanasius, pressed his brother for Athanasius's restoration, and Constantius agreed to his return in 345 CE, when the Arian bishop of Alexandria,

Gregory of Cappadocia, had died. Again, Athanasius returned in triumph and enjoyed a "golden decade" on the patriarchal throne from 346–56 CE.

In 350 CE, Constantius became the sole emperor of a united empire, after Constans was killed in a rebellion, which Constantius suppressed. Constantius, now free from the interference of a rival emperor who would intercede on the bishop's behalf, was now determined to remove Athanasius from the See of Alexandria. Given his support there, this could be done only by force. In January 356 CE, a military commander and his troops stormed the Church of Theonas in Alexandria, where Athanasius was presiding over a service. In the turmoil, the bishop escaped. The uproar poured out onto the streets of the city, and four months would pass before the imperial government could wrest control of the churches of Alexandria from those loyal to Athanasius. The newly appointed bishop, George, could not even enter the city until February 357 CE and was kept safe only by an armed escort. He finally fled Alexandria in October 358 CE and kept away for three years. When Emperor Constantius died in 361 CE, Bishop George was lynched by an Alexandrian mob just before Christmas. Meanwhile, Athanasius had spent six years on the run, protected by his supporters, as he moved from monastic settlements in the desert and local churches in and around Egypt. It was during this period of exile that Athanasius wrote the *Life of Antony*, which demonstrated the bishop's support for the development of monasticism and how the movement could be used to support Orthodox theology and ecclesiastical leadership. This was one of the most influential and popular texts in Christian history.

After the death of Constantius, Emperor Julian allowed all Christian exiles to return and Athanasius again took up the patriarchal throne of Alexandria in February 362 CE. It was Julian's religious policy not to persecute or prioritize any form of Christianity theology, but to give freedom for all forms and their followers, knowing that this would cause dissension among Christians, who were more hostile to variances in Christian theology than to anything else as they ferociously fought among themselves over even the slightest difference. There was but one exception to Julian's policy: Athanasius, whom he exiled because of concerns about the powerful leader's influence. This was a brief exile, since Julian died in 363 CE. Emperor Valens, who also embraced Arian Christianity, also exiled Athanasius in 365 CE but, faced with an uprising in Alexandria, relented and in 366 CE restored the throne to the bishop, which he held until his death in 373 CE.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Julian the Apostate; *Key Events*: Nicaea, Council of

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Basil of Caesarea (330–379 CE)

Basil of Caesarea was one of a triad of fourth-century church leaders and theologians from Cappadocia (in Anatolia) who had a profound influence on the theological and institutional development of Christianity. These Cappadocian Fathers were Basil of Caesarea, his younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil's friend Gregory of Nazianzus. The Cappadocian Fathers played a pivotal role in articulating and explaining the doctrine of the Trinity (One God in three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), which was confirmed by the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, and in defeating the Christian theology of Arianism. The title of "the Great" was given to Basil because of the extent of his impact on the Christian Church. This influence was evident in his highly active leadership, his impassioned theological defense of Orthodox Christianity, his promotion and organization of monastic life, and in his work on the Christian liturgy itself.

Basil was born around 330 CE in the Cappadocian city of Caesarea to an aristocratic Christian family, which had already produced a generation recognized for its saintliness. Basil's mother had 10 children, of whom three sons would become bishops and saints (Basil, Gregory, and Peter), and one daughter would also be recognized as a saint (Macrina). Basil's education began at the feet of his father, who was highly skilled in rhetoric, and he continued his studies at Constantinople and then Athens, where he reunited with his childhood acquaintance from Cappadocia, Gregory of Nazianzus. Around 356 CE, Basil completed his studies and returned to Caesarea to begin a public career. Basil valued the classics he studied but also saw them as a potential concern for young people. To resolve this, he wrote a treatise called *Exhortation to Youth*, which addressed the value of classical culture and how Christians should take what is useful, such as the rhetorical power and beauty, while avoiding the "poison" of pagan morality and ideas. Classical culture is valuable, even essential, for education but must be approached carefully and used only to penetrate the divine mysteries of the Holy Scriptures.

Basil soon abounded any interest in a civil career to pursue the Christian ascetic life. He was drawn to the monastic movement and traveled to its birthplace in Egypt, visiting ascetic communities and hermits, and continued this experiential education in monastic life in the Holy Land, Syria, and Mesopotamia. Returning to Cappadocia, Basil embraced the monastic life, attracting a following of those who wanted to join him. One of those followers was Gregory of Nazianzus, who visited in 358 CE. Together their ascetic practice was infused with their intellectual power, and Gregory contributed to Basil's two *Rules* for the monastic life as well as an anthology of the works of the Christian theologian Origen. The two *Rules*, *the Longer* and the *Shorter*, would be guiding documents for the organization of monasticism in the Orthodox tradition.

Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea, was instrumental in the development of Eastern Christian cenobitic monasticism. Originally written in Greek, Rufinus of Aquileia translated Basil's *Rules* for the monastic life into Latin. In this form, it spread to the West and exercised a profound influence on Western Benedictine monasticism. (CM Dixon/Print Collector/Getty Images)

Basil remained committed to the monastic life, but his focus was forced to shift when the bishop of Caesarea convinced him to receive ordination as priest. It was during this time that Basil reformed the liturgy and is credited as the author of the *Liturgy of Saint Basil,* which is used in the Orthodox Church 10 times each year (during the Lenten and Christmas season and on the feast day of Saint Basil), when the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is not in use.

In 370 CE, upon the death of the bishop of Caesarea, Basil became his successor. As bishop, Basil invested in the care of the population through philanthropic activity. Basil also actively opposed the Christian theology of Arianism, which then prevailed in Constantinople with the support of Emperor Valens. Basil had already written against Arianism in his *Against Eunomius* and continued this attack in his *On the Holy Spirit*. As bishop, Basil delivered sermons, many of which were acclaimed for their theological and rhetorical value, including his *In Hexameron* ("*In Six Days*"), which addressed creation and the role of the creator. He also argued against paganism and Manicheanism and employed classical ideas, such as those of Aristotle and Plato, wherever useful. The imperial administration

attempted to intimidate Basil into yielding to Arian theology, but the bishop stood firm, much to the emperor's surprise, and Valens backed down. To weaken Basil's influence, the emperor divided Cappadocia into two ecclesiastical provinces, reducing Basil's control and setting up a rival bishop nearby. To counter this, Basil created new bishoprics and convinced his friend Gregory of Nazianzus, who was wholly unwilling, to serve as bishop of one of these. Basil made common cause with Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria and Bishop Damasus of Rome to promote Orthodoxy against the challenge of Arianism. Imperial support for Arianism ended on the battlefield when Emperor Valens died on August 9, 378 CE, at the Battle of Adrianople, but Basil would not live to enjoy the theological victory. He died on January 1, 379 CE, before the triumph of Nicene theology at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381 CE.

In addition to his treatises and sermons, Basil left a collection of more than 300 letters, which provide great insight into contemporary issues as well as his personal relations.

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See also: *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; Gregory of Nazianzus; *Groups and Organizations*: Cenobites; *Key Events*: Adrianople, Battle of; Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople

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Basil the Great. *See* Basil of Caesarea

Belisarius (505–565 CE)

Belisarius was the most famous general in the age of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) and remains the most widely recognized commander in Byzantine history. He benefited from his association with the great historian Procopius, who served on Belisarius's staff from 527 to 540 CE. This fame is reflected by his appearance in modern novels, plays, movies, and even video games.

Belisarius rose to prominence during the Byzantine-Persian War that began in 527 CE. Justinian appointed Belisarius commander of the frontier city of Dara, after removing the previous commander. Dara was the most important defensive position on the frontier with Persia. Belisarius won recognition as s highly able leader and was promoted to general in 529 CE. The war officially ended when Shah Khusro I agreed to a "Perpetual Peace" in 532 CE. The professional relationship that tied Procopius to Belisarius began in this war, when Procopius became Belisarius's legal adviser and secretary in 527 CE.

With the eastern front at peace, Belisarius and fellow general Mundo were in Constantinople when the Nika Revolt, involving the circus factions, known as the Blues and the Greens, broke out against Justinian. In January 532 CE, the city's prefect arrested rioters, both Blues and Greens, and ordered the execution of seven of them for murder. On January 10, three were ordered to be executed by hanging, but two of the condemned, one Blue and one Green, fell to the ground and were given refuge in a nearby church. On January 13, the gathered crowds in the Hippodrome called on the emperor to pardon them, but he refused. The mob turned angry, shouting "*nika*" ("victory") and stormed downtown Constantinople, overrunning the prefect's headquarters and freeing all those detained inside. In the frenzy, buildings were set ablaze, which consumed the church of Hagia Sophia, a Senate house, public baths, and even a portion of the imperial palace complex. The people's demands now extended to the removal of some of Justinian's highest officials—Praetorian Prefect John the Cappadocian and Quaestor Tribonian—to which Justinian consented. Yet, the mob raged on. By January 15, the crowd began to call for a new emperor, while the imperial guard could not contain the increasing urban threat. On Sunday, January 18, Justinian appeared in the imperial box in the Hippodrome with Bible in hand to try to restore order by admitting his original error and pardoning the condemned. This show of contrition failed, and the people now called on Hypatius, a senator and nephew of Emperor Anastasius I, to become emperor. Many senators, sensing (or even hoping) that Justinian's reign was collapsing, rallied in support of Hypatius. Justinian was shaken by these events and considered yielding, but Theodora rejected this proposal, declaring death preferable to abandoning the imperial throne. Because they had recently returned from the Persian War, Justinian was able to send Belisarius and Mundo to storm the Hippodrome, where the crowd had gathered to acclaim Hypatius. A massacre ensued, while Hypatius and his brother, Pompeius, were arrested and then executed. The death toll was reported to be some 30,000. Such was the price of imposing imperial order.

In the aftermath of the revolt, Justinian began his reconquest of the West, claiming that his actions were fired by a concern for Orthodox Christianity (the Germanic Vandals ruling North Africa were Arian Christians persecuting an Orthodox population) and for the liberation of Roman subjects who lived under non-Roman rulers. The deposition of pro-Byzantine Vandal King Hilderic by his cousin Gelimer gave Justinian a pretext for the invasion of North Africa. Hilderic had appealed for aid, before being murdered by his successor. Justinian ordered Belisarius to restore imperial order. The move was not without risk, since previous imperial expeditions to

recover North Africa had ended with costly failures under Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE) in 442 and Leo I (r. 457–474 CE) in 468 CE and in 470 CE. Belisarius was the commander of a fleet of some 500 ships manned by 30,000 sailors and crew, carrying 15,000 soldiers and their horses. The fleet was protected by an additional 90 warships and 2,000 marines. En route, the armada endured problems with provisions, which claimed some 500 lives, but made its way to Sicily, which was then under the control of the Ostrogothic king of Italy, who had agreed to allow safe harbor. Belisarius sent his secretary, Procopius, along with various spies to the Sicilian city of Syracuse to gather information about the Vandal navy and logistics for the approaching invasion. By chance, Procopius happened upon a fellow countryman from Palestine, who had commercial interests in Carthage, the capital of Vandal Africa. From him, Procopius learned that the Vandal navy had left for Sardinia to suppress a rebellion and that Gelimer was also away from Carthage. Armed with this information, Belisarius set sail, landing safely in North Africa, about four days' march from Carthage, three months after setting out from Constantinople.

Belisarius marched on the city and met a Vandal army about 10 miles from Carthage at *Ad Decimum* (named for the distance from the city) and defeated it. Belisarius then entered the city without resistance and began repairing the walls, anticipating the Vandal siege, since the Vandal force was then returning from Sardinia. In December 535 CE, the united Vandal army advanced to the city and was defeated at Tricamarum. Belisarius held in hand Vandal Africa, its king, capital, and treasury and secured control of Sardinia and Balearic Islands. He returned to Constantinople with monarch, treasury, and Vandal soldiers, who were later enrolled in Byzantine units.

KHUSRO I

Khusro I (531–579 CE) was a shah (king) of the Sassanian Dynasty, which ruled Persia from 224 to 651 CE. The capital of the Sassanian Empire was Ctesiphon on the Tigris River, a short distance from present-day Baghdad in Iraq. Khusro's reforms greatly increased the power of Sassanian Persia. Khusro reformed the state's tax structure and bureaucracy, which was then managed by a prime minister, and invested in infrastructure projects. He increased central control over the military, which he effectively wielded against the Huns and the Byzantine Empire. With this enhanced army, Khusro broke the treaty of 532 CE and invaded the empire in 540 CE, taking advantage of Justinian's focus on the West. A 50-year peace treaty was finally established in 561 CE, though it would last only through Justinian's reign. Khusro was also a patron of the arts, sponsoring the collection of texts from India and welcoming pagan philosophers who had been persecuted by his rival, Justinian. Culture flourished during his reign, and many important Persian literary texts are thought to stem from this period, though it is not certain. Khusro is the most celebrated monarch in the dynasty's history and earned the epithet "Anoshirvan" ("Immortal Soul"), by which he is traditionally known. Though the Sassanians were Zoroastrian, Khusro was remembered as a model of justice even by later Muslim rulers of Persia.

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Both triumphant general and defeated king prostrated before the emperor. The victory in North Africa was swift, but managing the territory would prove an ongoing challenge because of recurring Berber revolts and Byzantine troops disgruntled over lack of payment.

Justinian next sent Belisarius against Ostrogothic Italy, where Justinian claimed to be avenging the murder of an Ostrogothic princess, Amalasuntha, by King Theodahad. The general seized Sicily in 535 CE with little resistance. He then crossed to the Italian peninsula and marched north to Naples in the summer of 536 CE. The city refused to open its gates, and so the general set siege. After one month, a soldier who simply wanted to see the covered Neapolitan aqueduct, which Belisarius had severed, entered the water system and discovered that it could be used to enter the city. With Belisarius armed with this information, the city stood little chance, despite some fierce resistance that triggered an angry retribution by Byzantine troops. News of the assault and the violence befalling those who resisted convinced other cities to open their gates. Frustrated by the failure of effective resistance, the Goths ousted Theodahad and replaced him with a new king, Vittigis, who murdered his predecessor.

As Belisarius approached Rome, Pope Silverius alerted him that he had the support of the city. Facing certain defeat, the Goths abandoned Rome for the time being. In December 536 CE, Rome was again in imperial hands, with a mere 5,000 troops, and Belisarius immediately began preparing for its defense. He sent word to Justinian, asking for additional troops, and Vittigis's army arrived in March 537 CE. The fight to hold the city, against enormous odds, was hard-won and a testament to Belisarius's leadership. During the siege, the Goths severed the aqueducts of Rome, which provided water to the city and generated a source of power for turning the flour mills. Belisarius improvised by setting up mill wheels in the Tiber River. The situation became even more difficult when the city's port fell, which prevented resupply to Rome. The condition was grave. Roman support was collapsing, and Belisarius intercepted a letter from Pope Silverius to Vittigis offering to surrender the city. The general exiled him, and Vigilius obtained the papal throne as his successor.

Belisarius finally received a modest reinforcement of 4,000 troops and shifted from defense to offense, sending a commander with 2,000 troops to move north, where he made his way all the way to the capital, Ravenna, while a Byzantine army, led by a eunuch general named Narses, moved into Italy from the Balkans. After a one-year siege, Vittigis withdrew his army and shifted the war to the north to protect the capital. The Goths offered to surrender Italy south of the Po River, if they could retain the region to the north. In the negotiations, the Goths wanted Belisarius to proclaim himself emperor, which, it seems, Belisarius pretended to agree but would do so only if he held Ravenna. The general was welcomed with his troops, but the agreement was a ruse, and he again seized capital, king, and treasury in 540 CE. Belisarius was recalled to Constantinople, arriving with the spoils, but found a cooler welcome. It appeared that the emperor held the general's loyalty more in doubt. Meanwhile, a charismatic leader named Totila (or Baduila) rallied the Ostrogoths. Totila was the most effective Ostrogothic leader since Theoderic and would prolong the war for more than a decade.

PRISON DIARY OF BOETHIUS

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was a Roman aristocrat and scholar who served the reign of Ostrogothic King Theoderic (493–526 CE) in Italy, as his father had worked for the previous Germanic regime of Odoacer. Boethius obtained the highest honors and was awarded a consulship in 510 CE. His family continued its distinction and his sons were nominated as consuls in 522 CE, the same year that Boethius was appointed as Theoderic's Master of Offices to lead the civil service. This reflected how the Germanic rulers of Italy accepted the existing aristocracy, which consented to govern in support of the new power. Boethius's fortunes turned, however, after Emperor Justin I ended a doctrinal dispute, which had caused a schism between Rome and Constantinople from 482–519 CE. The schism had strengthened Theoderic's hand in Italy, but with Rome and Constantinople again in harmony, he was apprehensive of Byzantine intentions in Italy and interpreted this rapprochement as cause for concern, particularly with the Ostrogoths adhering to a "heretical" (Arian) form of Christianity. Boethius was caught in this tension, though without cause. In 523 CE, he was imprisoned and then executed at Pavia in 524 or 525 CE. While in prison, however, he composed a remarkable Latin text, *On the Consolation of Philosophy*. The text reveals his mastery of classical literature, both Greek and Latin, and his skill as a poet, and it presents a dialogue between the prisoner and Philosophy, who has descended from heaven to offer insight and encouragement. The book was extremely popular in the West in the Middle Ages, though it was not read in the Byzantine Empire.

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In the first phase of the Gothic War, the Goths had appealed to the Persians to open a second front against the Byzantines. Taking advantage of Justinian's focus on Italy, Persian Shah Khusro I (r. 531–579 CE) invaded in 540 CE, breaking the "Perpetual Peace" treaty that he had signed in 532 CE, and seized Antioch. Justinian now ordered Belisarius to this third theater of war. Before the general could make headway, however, Justinian recalled him, under a cloud of suspicion.

Belisarius remained in Constantinople until 544 CE, when the emperor sent him back to Italy to try to restore the imperial cause, which had been greatly weakened by Totila. The Byzantine army, however, was itself greatly weakened by the devastation of the plague that struck the empire in 541 CE and hampered recruitment efforts. Facing a chronic shortage of manpower, Belisarius managed only to maintain a hold on fortified areas, while Totila dominated and even retook Rome. Belisarius was recalled in 549 CE and retired. He was soon replaced in Italy by Narses, who, equipped with a massive increase in troop size, would bring the war to its conclusion.

Justinian called the general back into service in 559 CE to defend the capital against a Bulgar invasion, and, once again, the veteran proved successful. In 562 CE, Belisarius was tried and convicted for corruption but was pardoned by Justinian. He died in 565 CE, the same year as Emperor Justinian.

The primary source for the life of Belisarius is Procopius, whose *History of the Wars* and *Secret History* provide the main narrative. *Wars* affords a detailed explanation of

his activities in the three theaters of war, while the *Secret History* offers an account of his personal life and his disreputable wife, Antonina, the friend of Theodora.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of; *Individuals*: Justinian; Narses; Procopius; Theodora; *Key Events*: Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Nika Revolt; Persia, Wars with

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Chrysostom, John (349–407 CE)

John Chrysostom was the patriarch of Constantinople from 397 to 404 CE and one of the most celebrated orators in the history of Christianity.

John was a native of Antioch, a leading city in the eastern Mediterranean, from a minor elite family. His father served in the imperial administration and died when John was an infant. John's mother, Anthousa, raised her son and wielded significant influence over his life. He received a classical education and was a student of Libanius (as was Emperor Julian the Apostate), a renowned rhetorician of late antiquity and a committed adherent of traditional (non-Christian) religion. John became so skilled in rhetoric that Libanius was reported to have wanted John to replace him as chair of rhetoric, had he not been a Christian. This training prepared John for a career in imperial civil service, but the young man was drawn to religious life. He began studying under the direction of the city's bishop, Meletius, and became a reader in Christian ministry. John was particularly interested in the ascetic life but refrained from pursuing this due to his mother's influence. When she passed away, he withdrew from urban life, retreated to the mountains, and practiced the ascetic life for four years, before retreating still further to live as an intensively ascetic life as a hermit.

John gave this up to live the Christian life "in the world," sensing that it was his mission to improve society through active service, moral edification, and personal

example. Throughout this time, John turned his pen to related topics, defending the higher value of clerical and monastic orders.

In 381 CE, John was ordained a deacon and participated in the charitable operations managed by the church of Antioch, which tended to the well-being of thousands of widows and young girls, prisoners, and the infirm. As a deacon, John continued to write treatises, some on the Christian life, which addressed the moral dimension of the faith and the need for zealous commitment, and others as fiercely polemical refutations of paganism and Judaism.

With an already extensive literary repertoire and practical experience in ministry, John was ordained a priest in 386 CE by Bishop Flavian, when he was around 37 years old. His duties as a priest now included preaching, in which he would be engaged for nearly two decades: in Antioch from 386–397 CE and then Constantinople until 404 CE. John was so exalted for his eloquence and oratorical power that he later received the epithet *Chrysostomos* ("Golden Mouth").

His ordination was followed by troubled times in Antioch. A new imperial tax incited an urban riot, in which portraits and statues of the emperor were overturned. The imperial reaction was swift and ruthless. The riot's ringleaders were immediately executed, and the city was unnerved by the fearsome reckoning that was to come, while Bishop Flavian departed to intervene on the city's behalf. It was throughout this frightening time that John delivered his 21 sermons known as "On the Statues," with a cathedral thronged with terrified citizens. He utilized this pivotal moment to reinforce fundamental Christian morality and behavior, while updating the citizens on the progress of the bishop, who eventually earned an amnesty for the city.

Over the next decade, John continued his ministry in Antioch, preaching and writing. Among the many works likely written in this period was *On the Priesthood*, his most influential treatise, which takes the form of a dialogue and makes the case for the importance of the priesthood and argues that the religious leader who lives and works in society faces the greater and more valuable task than that of the monk who has withdrawn from it. It is a defense of the active and engaged religious life, of one struggling on behalf of others, over that of his sheltered colleagues. Among the prominent themes in these writings are a concern for the poor and the importance of generosity; the vileness of ostentation and vainglory; the problem of greed, particularly among the wealthy; the imminent danger of public entertainments that stir passions and lead people astray; and a fanatical denigration of paganism and Judaism.

John's immense talent did not go unnoticed by Constantinople. Thus, when Nectarius, the patriarch of Constantinople, died in September 397 CE, Emperor Arcadius (r. 395–408 CE), acting under the influence of his chief adviser, Eutropius, summoned John to the capital, where he was soon consecrated as the city's new bishop. His appointment was completely opposed by Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, who used his influence for his own choice of candidate.

As bishop, John continued his work of moral persuasion from the pulpit and did so by preaching much closer to the congregation than was typical for his day, while managing the administrative and financial responsibilities of the episcopal office. John reduced spending wherever he deemed it excessive, including eliminating banquets

that had been previously hosted in the episcopal palace, opting for a more ascetic tone, while channeling funds to philanthropic activity. Rejecting such banquets, John ate modestly and regularly dined alone, a remnant of his days as a hermit. This change, however, stimulated a bitter reaction from those who had enjoyed and benefited from such occasions, and John's enemies made use of this habit of solitary dining as evidence of his need to hide the fact that he was a glutton.

In addition, John imposed greater discipline on the vast clerical administration that he now oversaw, even deposing clerics who were found unworthy because of improper ordination or behavior. His reforming zeal extended beyond Constantinople and into the Balkans and Anatolia. John demanded increased discipline from the monks in Constantinople, who posed a challenge to his authority and seemed to live a monastic life that was different from the monastic ideal that John embraced. These reforms provoked forces of opposition, which would eventually unite against him.

John's moralizing, in and out of the pulpit, paid dividends. In 399 CE, Emperor Arcadius (r. 395–408 CE) banned theatrical shows, horse races, and other public entertainments from taking place on Sunday, unless that Sunday marked an imperial birthday; imperial power trumped all. The bishop continued to preach on issues of poverty and injustice and exhorted the rich to improve the cruel economic imbalance in society. John vehemently opposed the lingering presence of Arian Christianity, which adhered to a rival form of theology that rejected the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, which Nicene Christians accepted. Arians in Constantinople made their presence known through public processions, against which John mobilized Nicene processions that culminated in a violent clash and led to an imperial ban on Arian processions. Many Germans in the army were Arians, but John was not opposed to Germans (specifically, the Goths) but to their form of Christianity. John set aside a church for Goths to worship in the Gothic language and appointed priests and clerical staff to serve them and established a community of Gothic monks in the city.

In 399 CE, John was drawn directly into a major political crisis. Gainas, the leading Gothic general in the East, hated the emperor's primary adviser and imperial chamberlain, Eutropius, whom he viewed as standing in the way of his aggrandizement of power. Gainas had already orchestrated the murder of Rufinus, the emperor's previous chief adviser. When Gainas was sent to suppress a Gothic rebellion in Asia Minor, he united with the Gothic leader and issued demands to the imperial government, including the arrest of Eutropius, to which the emperor agreed. In fear, Eutropius sought the bishop's protection, an event that generated vivid material for John's sermons, in which he illustrated the fleeting nature of power and the vanity of secular concerns. Eutropius received a reprieve but was later arrested and executed. Gainas's demands and influence increased. He moved troops into the capital to secure his hold, but when he asked for an Arian church, the bishop refused. This theological friction and the presence of German troops in the city strained tensions to the breaking point. To reduce this, Gainas began transferring troops out of the city, but this triggered a popular reaction and a massacre of the remaining soldiers. Gainas fled and was later executed.

Among the results of the incident was that Eudoxia, Arcadius's wife, assumed an even more influential position over her husband. This posed a problem for John after

he defended a widow whose property the empress appropriated. Her anger increased when, in a sermon, he referred to the wicked activities of the biblical Queen Jezebel, which was popularly viewed as a reference to the empress.

From 401 to 402 CE, John exercised his reforming authority over ecclesiastical provinces in Asia Minor, reviewing clergy, deposing bishops for violations of canon law, consecrating new ones, and closing non-Nicene churches. In his absence, John's rivals and enemies began advocating against him to the imperial court, with the empress amenable to such antagonism. The drama escalated when John provided asylum to Egyptian monks, known as the "Long Brothers," who were accused of harboring heretical views. The fact that John appeared to intervene in the jurisdiction of another bishop provided Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, with an opportunity to take direct action against John. For Theophilus, this action would also emphasize the priority of Alexandria over its rival city in the East, Constantinople.

Theophilus arrived in the capital in 403 CE. He ignored the usual protocol of paying respects to the city's bishop and was lodged in an imperial residence outside Constantinople, where he secured ties with John's enemies. The government acquiesced to Theophilus's plan to summon an ecclesiastical synod of 36 bishops, 29 of whom were from Egypt, brought by Theophilus. Also present were bishops whom John had deposed in Anatolia as well as disgruntled monks of Constantinople. Known as the Synod of the Oak, this tribunal indicted John of more than two dozen charges, but the bishop defiantly refused the summons to appear. He was deposed *in absentia*, and the synod's decision was reported to the emperor for action to be taken.

The city's populace rallied in defense of their bishop. Crowds surrounded Hagia Sophia, preventing imperial efforts to arrest him, and the bishop continued to assert his influence through preaching. As tensions increased, John opted to surrender and was quietly escorted out of the city, even as he protested the judgment against him. The public realization of what happened stirred turmoil. Triumphant monks took hold of Hagia Sophia and were ousted by imperial troops, while the palace hesitated in its next decision. These doubts were forgotten when seismic activity, perceived as a divine message, suddenly occurred. John was recalled to a cheering crowd and a new, larger synod was summoned to review the previous decision, which it overruled. John remained the city's bishop.

Yet, this honeymoon did not last long. Their relationship deteriorated further when John condemned loud public entertainments associated with the dedication of a statue of the empress and later made a sermon reference to Herodias raging and seeking the head of John the Baptist, which was again interpreted as an allusion to Eudoxia. Less than two months after his return, the imperial family refused to attend Christmas service in Hagia Sophia, claiming that John's position as bishop was in question. This tense atmosphere dragged on for several months, with each side mobilizing allied ecclesiastical resources. Finally, in Holy Week, the emperor ordered John to resign, but the bishop refused. On Easter Sunday, while clergy loyal to John were baptizing Christians, several hundred soldiers violently stormed the area, thoroughly disrupting activity and manifesting the kind of violence that was to come. This highly tense situation dragged on for another month, with John protected by crowds and even surviving an assassination attempt. Finally, John's ecclesiastical opponents pressured

Arcadius to resolve the situation. On June 9, 404 CE, the emperor ordered the bishop into exile. Before turning himself in, John sent letters asking for support and detailing events to the bishop of Rome and other ecclesiastical leaders in the West. John again quietly surrendered to avoid bloodshed and was taken out of the city. When the crowds realized that John was no longer in the city, rioting began, with the cathedral and Senate house set in flames.

Now in imperial custody, John was treated harshly and moved far to the east to Caucasus in Armenia, where he remained for nearly three years. There, he wrote letters and received visitors from the church of Antioch. This contact was too much for the imperial palace, which ordered John moved farther away, and he died en route on September 14, 407 CE.

The events of John's deposition reflected existing tensions between Alexandria and Constantinople, which would worsen in the fifth century, seriously jeopardizing relations between Rome and Constantinople. The latter was healed with greater ease and John's memory was quickly venerated. The reign of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE), son of Arcadius and Eudoxia, witnessed John's triumphal return, when his relics were brought back to Constantinople on January 27, 438 CE, with great honor and veneration, even by the imperial family. These relics remain in the cathedral of the patriarch of Constantinople down to the present. Today, the primary liturgy used in Orthodox Church bears the name of John Chrysostom.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; *Individuals*: Arcadius; Rufinus

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Comnena, Anna (1083–1153)

Anna was the eldest child of Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) and Empress Irene Doukaina, and author of *The Alexiad*, a masterpiece of medieval literature and a significant historical source for understanding Alexius's reign. *The Alexiad* is a biography of her father, whose life and accomplishments she felt a necessity to document. Anna expressed the importance of this task and the highest value of history:

> The stream of Time, irresistible, ever moving, carries off and bears away all things that come to birth and plunges them into utter darkness, both deeds of no account and deeds which are mighty and worthy of commemoration. . . . The

science of History is a great bulwark against the stream of Time; in a way it checks this irresistible flood, it holds in a tight grasp whatever it can seize floating on the surface and will not allow it to slip away into the depths of Oblivion. (*Alexiad*, 1.1–10, tr. Sewter)

Anna introduced herself and her qualifications at the start of her work:

I, Anna, Daughter of the Emperor Alexius and Empress Irene, born and bred in the Purple, not without some acquaintance with literature—having devoted the most earnest study to the Greek language, in fact, and being not unpracticed in Rhetoric and having read thoroughly the treatises of Aristotle and the dialogues of Plato, and having fortified my mind with the *Quadrivium* of sciences (these things must be divulged and it is not self-advertisement to recall what Nature and my own zeal for knowledge have given me, nor what God has apportioned to me from above and what has been contributed by Opportunity. (*Alexiad*, 1.2, tr. Sewter)

As she stated, Anna was born in Constantinople in the purple birthing chamber (the *porphyra*) of the imperial palace in 1083, two years after her father had become emperor. She was the eldest child of the marriage between two leading aristocratic families, that of the Comnenus and Ducas clans, and was named after her paternal grandmother, Anna Dalassena. From birth, Anna was betrothed to Constantine Ducas, son of Emperor Michael Doukas (r. 1071–1078), which would further cement the alliance between the families. From the earliest age, Anna embraced the expectation that she would one day reign as empress. Two events directly threatened the fulfillment of this expectation: the birth of her brother, John, in 1087 and the death of her betrothed, Constantine Ducas.

Anna dedicated her attention to learning. She received a superior classical education and studied literature, mathematics, medicine, and philosophy, a subject to which her pious mother had drawn her attention. At 14, Anna was married to a member of another aristocratic family, Nicephorus Bryennius. The marriage was a lasting one, and the couple had four children. Anna continued her intellectual pursuits in the sciences and humanities and hosted gatherings for discussing intellectual topics.

Anna never relinquished her goal of becoming empress and sought, though fruitlessly, to make Nicephorus Alexius's successor. She seethed at her brother, John, who had already been crowned coemperor in 1092 and then acclaimed as emperor on their father's death in 1118. With her mother, Irene, Anna plotted against her brother, who forced her to become a nun at the Monastery of the Virgin *Kecharitomene*, which Irene had founded, and where she too was confined. Irene died there in 1123. Embittered, but dedicated to intellectual pursuits and religious devotion in the monastery, it was there that Anna composed her *Alexiad*, writing between 1137 and 1147.

The Alexiad traces Alexius's path to power (Books 1–3), his wars with the Normans, Pechenegs, and Turks (Books 410), and his interactions with the First Crusade (Books 11–13), and, finally, his religious and philanthropic activity and additional military endeavors (Books 14–15).

Anna drew on classical historians, such as Herodotus and Thucydides, as models, using classical terms to refer to contemporary peoples, such as Celts for Normans and Scythians for Turks. She also composed the historical account as an epic, inspired by Homer's *Iliad*, after which the text was named, with Alexius as its hero and Anna, a participant in the drama, acting as his "Homer," bard of this Byzantine tale. The text employs Homeric images, quotations, and comparisons. Anna was also knowledgeable of Byzantine historiography and was influenced by the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellus (r. 1018–1078), but her text was never derivative, and Anna's insight and presence permeates the narrative:

> Even now I cannot believe that I am still alive and writing this account of the emperor's death. I put my hands to my eyes, wondering if what I am relating here is not all a dream. (*Alexiad*, 15.11, tr. Sewter)

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See also: *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; *Groups and Organizations*: Normans; *Key Events*: First Crusade

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Comnenus, Alexius I (r. 1081–1118)

Alexius Comnenus was a Byzantine emperor from 1081 to 1118 and founder of the Comnenus Dynasty (1081–1185). His reign was remarkable for stabilizing the empire after a period of unrelenting disaster and for establishing a new foundation for imperial power, which altered the structure of the state and its relationship with powerful aristocratic families on which it now relied. Alexius, like Diocletian before, inherited an empire on the brink of collapse and restored it through effective military leadership and organizational ability.

Byzantine power had reached a zenith in the 11th century. The empire's armies were triumphant in East and West, the treasury was full, and imperial power was projected by a highly centralized administrative structure. Yet, the half century between the death of Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE) and the rise of Emperor Alexius in 1081 endured defeat, rebellion, and a virtual dissolution of imperial power because of ineffective leadership, failed policies that triggered financial trouble and insurrection, and the appearance of formidable new threats: the Normans in the west, the nomadic Pechenegs in the north (the Balkan frontier), and the Seljuq Turks in the east.

In spring 1071, the Normans conquered Bari, eliminating the last Byzantine possession in Italy, and, at the other end of the empire, in late summer 1071, Seljuq Sultan Alp Arslan (r. 1063–1072) defeated the Byzantine army at Manzikert, capturing Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes (r. 1068–1071) and opening Anatolia to Turkish incursions, marking the beginning of the Turkification of Anatolia. The enemies of Byzantium were aided by a Byzantine civil war (1071–1072) that followed the defeat at Manzikert, then a three-year rebellion in Anatolia by Russell Balliol, a Norman mercenary commander in Byzantine service, and then a second civil war of the decade (1077–1081).

It was in this anarchic period that the 18-year old Alexius, from the aristocratic Comnenus family, became a general under Emperor Michael VII Ducas (r. 1071–1078). He proved his leadership ability and, at 24 years of age, maneuvered to seize the throne on April 1, 1081, from the aged emperor, Nicephorus III Botaneiates (1078–1081), with the help of his brother, Isaac Comnenus, and Caesar John Ducas, grandfather of Alexius's wife.

Alexius's reign relied on an alliance of leading families, such as the Comnenus, Palaeologus, Bryennius, Melissenus, and Ducas families. These alliances were often bound by marriages. In this family diplomacy, Alexius was guided by his mother, Anna Dalassena, who arranged marriages for her children and zealously opposed any who stood in the way of her family's power. Anna had arranged Alexius's marriage to Irene, which united the Comnenus and Ducas families. Alexius relied heavily on family members for political and military posts and on his mother, into whose care he entrusted the administration, when he was on campaign. Rather than rely on eunuchs as previous emperors had done, Alexius's palace was managed by his family.

Alexius implemented various other changes to rebuild the state. He eliminated the stipends (*rogai*) that were associated with Byzantine titles and ranks and invented new court titles for his family, above the existing ranks, and emphasized their preeminence. These titles were based on the word *sebastos* (Greek for Augustus): his brothers became *sebastokrator* and *pansebastos*, while his brothers-in-law became *protosebastos* and *panyhypersebastos*. Payment for such honors was not in coin, but in land, from which rank holders obtained revenue and labor. The emperor also made grants of *pronoia*, which provided the holder with the revenue of a designated area in return for service, generally military, to the state. The *pronoia* holder collected the revenue *directly* and held rights to peasant labor. The *pronoia* manifested an increase in decentralizing tendencies, which the pioneer Byzantine historian George Ostrogorsky viewed as equivalent to a Western fief (*feudum*), though other scholars counter that the Byzantine state never relinquished ownership of the *pronoia* or judicial oversight.

ORPHANOTROPHEION

Anna praised Alexius for his support of the Orphanotropheion, or Orphanage of Constantinople. The Orphanotropheion of Zotikos was located on the acropolis of Constantinople (where the Ottoman Topkapi Palace now resides) and had its origins in the early Byzantine empire. The Orphanotropheion was directed by the *orphanotrophos*. In the sixth century, Emperor Justin II added a church dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul to the complex, and so the Orphanotropheion is sometimes referred to as that of Saint Paul. The Orphanotropheion took care of children in need and provided them with an education. It also had a choral music program, and citizens of Constantinople would visit to hear the choir, which also performed elsewhere in the city at a variety of religious and imperial ceremonies.

There were other foundations that provided care for orphans, but this was the most prominent. In fact, it was the most preeminent philanthropic institution in the entire empire, and the *orphanotrophos* was an important figure who regularly held high rank, such as *patrikios* or *protospatharios*. Several directors became patriarchs and another, John of Paphlagonia, was an adviser to Emperors Basil II (976–1025) and Romanus III (1028–1034) and virtually ran the government under his brother Michael IV (1034–1041), whom he helped gain the throne, and then arranged for his nephew Michael V (1041–1042) to become emperor as well.

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Alexius also aimed at restoring Byzantium's currency. Byzantine coinage had become so debased during the troubles of the 11th century that he needed to restore its stability and reliability. Alexius minted a new gold coin, the *hyperpyron*, which was smaller than the previous *nomisma* and about seven-eighths the value, and added several mixed-metal (silver and gold) and copper coins of smaller denominations.

To reestablish the empire's security, Alexius focused on the imminent Norman threat of Robert Guiscard, Duke of Sicily and Southern Italy, who launched his invasion in 1081. Robert claimed to act on behalf of deposed Emperor Michael VII, whose son had been engaged to marry Robert's daughter. Scrambling to meet this challenge, the emperor recruited a new army, composed of any available manpower, including Turkish mercenaries and even heretics from the Balkans. He also appealed to Venice for assistance and granted it exemptions from the empire's 10 percent customs duty and offered docks in the Golden Horn of Constantinople in return for naval support. The latter secured the sea, but Alexius still suffered multiple defeats on land. The emperor's agents fomented a rebellion in Italy, which required Robert's return, while his son, Bohemond, pressed on. Alexius finally scored a victory over the Normans in 1083, forcing Bohemond to abandon the effort and return to Italy. Robert prepared a second invasion but died in 1085, affording a reprieve for the empire.

Alexius then concentrated on the Pechenegs, who had invaded the Balkans. These nomads had soundly defeated the emperor in 1087 and advanced to the capital by 1091. Alexius utilized diplomacy to form an alliance with another nomadic tribe, the Cumans, with whom he crushed the Pechenegs in Thrace at the Battle of Levounion on April 21, 1091. For the moment, Alexius had eradicated another great challenge, though he soon

had to confront the Cumans. Having established a victorious basis for political stability, Alexius announced in 1092 that his heir would be his firstborn son, John Comnenus (born in 1087), and no longer his adopted son, Constantine Ducas, the son of Michael VII Ducas, whom he had named as heir a decade earlier at the start of his reign.

Since Alexius had inherited the dual problem of imminent military threat and a bare treasury, he had resorted to the confiscation of church treasury to meet the pressing needs of state. This action exposed him to reproach from church leadership. Alexius deposed the patriarch, who was a critical voice, and faced continued disparagement from Bishop Leo of Chalcedon, whom he exiled. To enhance his pious credibility, Alexius prosecuted the philosopher John Italus, the day's most prominent intellectual, for heresy. An added value was that Italus had close ties to the Ducas family and the condemnation enhanced the Comnenus family at the expense of the Ducas. Through such activity, Alexius presented himself as a champion of Orthodoxy, from John's heresy trial at the start of his reign to the public execution of Basil the Bogomil, another heretical leader, at his reign's end. Alexius was supported by his appointee, Patriarch Nicholas the Grammarian (r. 1084–1111), and together they sought to improve church administration, reform the clergy, and eliminate lay control over monastic property. In addition, Alexius and his family demonstrated their piety by building churches and monasteries and funding philanthropic activity.

After the emperor had stabilized the frontiers in the west and north, he turned his attention to the east, where various Turkish principalities dominated Anatolia. These were not under the command of the great Seljuq Sultan Malik Shah (r. 1072–1092). The sultan was more interested in Fatimid Egypt than in Byzantine Anatolia and offered Alexius an alliance, secured by a marriage tie between their families, to help him gain control of these renegade Turkish forces. Alexius was lukewarm to this proposal and nothing materialized, since the sultan died in 1092 and the Seljuqs fell to infighting. This allowed Kilij Arslan to establish an independent Turkish state, called the Sultanate of Rum, as the most durable Turkish principality in Anatolia.

To help in his anti-Turkish effort, in 1095, Alexius sent legates to Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099) to request troops. The pope was supportive of the idea of a Christian force battling the might of Islam but used the request to launch the First Crusade and restore Jerusalem to Christian control, which was not what Alexius had intended. To reach that destination, however, Crusaders would need to pass through Constantinople and then Anatolia. In summer 1096, the first Western force reached the imperial capital, having left a trail of violence en route. The emperor encouraged this vanguard force to wait for the army that was coming, but their leader, Peter the Hermit, rejected the warning. The eager warriors were ferried to Anatolia and promptly massacred by the Turks. In fall 1096 and winter 1097, large Crusader contingents arrived, with some 30,000 foot and 5,000 cavalry, guided through the Balkans by Byzantine military escorts to minimize disturbances to imperial subjects. Despite this precaution, some Crusaders pillaged because of delays in the arrival of provisions, which the empire furnished. In Constantinople, Alexius required commanders to swear an oath to return all formerly Byzantine land that was conquered. There was tension over the request and over cultural differences between Byzantine and Latin Christian culture,

but this was effectively managed, much to the credit of Alexius's talents. In Anatolia, the city of Nicaea returned to Byzantine control and the Crusaders battled their way eastward. During this time, Alexius asserted Byzantine control over western Anatolia, much of which had been in Turkish hands, and then over the southern and, later, northern coasts of Anatolia. Turkish power remained in the center, on the Anatolian plateau, with Iconion (modern Konya) as the capital of the Sultanate of Rum.

In 1097, the Crusaders seized Antioch, but then faced a major Turkish counterattack and appealed to the emperor for help. Sensing their inevitable defeat, Alexius did not answer the call. This was an error. The Crusaders overcame the odds and their Turkish besiegers, and the Byzantine failure to assist strained relations between the empire and the Crusaders. Relations were further strained after Bohemond became the ruler of Antioch in addition to his lands in the West. In 1107, Bohemond launched another invasion of Byzantium and besieged Dyrrachium on the Adriatic coast. The Norman was defeated and agreed to swear an oath of fealty to Emperor Alexius, but his nephew Tancred continued to hold Antioch, refusing to return it to the empire. Alexius assessed that his greatest threat was not Turkish but Crusader. His foreign policy required regular negotiation and alliance with rulers of newly founded Crusader states, while also looking elsewhere for additional support. He allied with the Hungarians and married his son and heir, John Comnenus, to a Hungarian princess named Prioska, who received a preferable Greek name, Irene.

On his deathbed in 1118, Alexius confirmed that his son John was his successor, though his wife and eldest daughter, Anna Comnena, believed that the succession should pass to Anna's husband, Nicephorus Bryennius. John relegated both mother and sister to a monastery, where, in frustration, Anna wrote *The Alexiad*, a biography of her father, in which she celebrated and memorialized her father's remarkable achievements.

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See also: *Individuals*: Comnena, Anna; *Groups and Organizations*: Normans; *Key Events*: First Crusade

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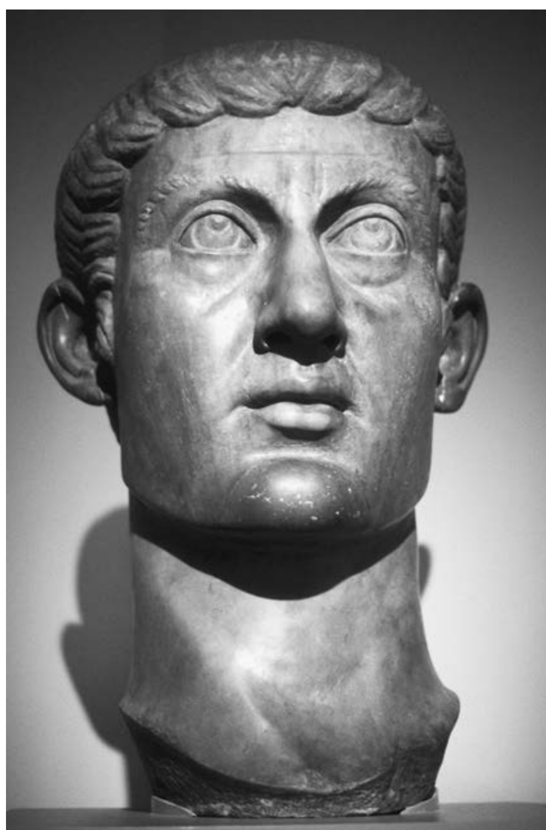
Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE)

A large 10th-century mosaic in Hagia Sophia, the great cathedral of Constantinople, prominently portrays two emperors, Constantine and Justinian (r. 527–565 CE). In a sense, these were the two emperors who fundamentally shaped the Byzantine worldview. In the 4th century, Constantine paved the way for a Christianized Roman Empire and established a new city, Constantinople, which was to become not just an imperial center but the premier city of the Mediterranean, while, in the 6th century, Justinian built Hagia Sophia, which became the symbol of the empire for a millennium and a testament to Byzantine wealth and technological skill. Constantine's reign marked the beginning of a revolution, and 11 Byzantine Emperors would bear his name, including the last, who died defending Constantine's city against the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Constantine was born in the Balkan city of Naissus (modern Niš in Serbia) around 273 CE. He was the son of a senior military commander named Constantius Chlorus and a woman of humble origins named Helena. Constantius had previously served in an imperial guard unit under Emperor Aurelian (270–275 CE) and continued his career through the reign of Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE), who, in 293 CE, appointed him as Caesar (junior emperor) in the West, as part of his imperial system that became known as the tetrarchy ("rule by four emperors"). As a precondition for the appointment, Constantius divorced Helena, married the daughter of the Augustus (senior emperor) Maximian (r. 286–305 CE), and entrusted his son, Constantine, to the court of Diocletian in Nicomedia. In 305 CE, Diocletian and Maximian retired. Constantius became Augustus in the West and Galerius (r. 305–311 CE) the Augustus in the East, with two new Caesars appointed: Severus (r. 306–307 CE) in the West and Maximian Daia (r. 308–313 CE) in the East. It was at that time that Constantine left Nicomedia to join his father.

Soon after his arrival, Constantius died in 306 CE and the army proclaimed Constantine as Augustus, which Galerius was willing to partially accept, recognizing Constantine only as Caesar. At the same time, Maxentius (r. 306–312 CE), son of retired Emperor Maximian, made his own bid for power and was acclaimed Caesar at Rome, with his father again as Augustus. Diocletian's tetrarchy was unraveling due to the ambition of sons who had been left out.

Maxentius defeated Severus, the legitimate Augustus in the West, and Constantine threw in his lot with him, divorcing his wife, Minervina, and marrying Maxentius's sister (Maximimian's daughter), Fausta. Seeking to bolster his own imperial status and to distance himself from the tetrarchy, Constantine pursued a new means of legitimacy. He declared that he was the grandson of Emperor Claudius Gothicus (r. 268–270 CE), whose victorious reign was cut short by plague, and he promoted a link to the solar deities Apollo and Sol Invictus ("Unconquered Sun"), neither of whom were part of the religious ideology of the tetrarchy. The cult of Sol Invictus had attracted several emperors from Claudius Gothicus to Constantine's father, Constantius. Constantine adopted Invictus ("unconquered") as an official title after 312 CE, and solar images appeared on his coins down to 325 CE.



Emperor Constantine built on the administrative reforms of his predecessor, Emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE), but initiated a religious and cultural revolution by promoting Christianity, beginning its ascendancy as the empire's dominant religion in the course of the fourth century. This bust of Constantine shows the emperor gazing reverently upward toward the heavenly realm. (Allan T. Kohl/Art Images for College Teaching)

In 312 CE, Constantine turned against Maxentius and aimed at supreme control in the West. He led his army across the Alps and marched on Rome, where he confronted his rival's army at the Milvian Bridge. It was before this battle that Constantine was reported to have seen a vision calling him to "conquer by this (sign)," which he attributed to the Christian God. Constantine defeated Maxentius and was welcomed by the Roman Senate as a liberator from tyranny. The Senate honored the emperor with a Triumphal Arch, which was dedicated in 315 CE and commemorated this victory.

Scholarly debates rage over the interpretation of Constantine's vision, striving to establish an accurate understanding of his conversion, to comprehend the influence of his Christian mother, Helena, and to gauge his level of understanding and commitment to the new faith. As has been noted, Constantine had already sought to employ religious connections to support his political power. He continued to hold the pagan title of Pontifex Maximus and to use pagan symbols on his coinage down to 323 CE. Yet, his support for Christianity and its clergy was unmistakable and marked the beginning of a revolution in the Roman state that would have permanent political and cultural ramifications.

At Milan in 313 CE, Constantine met with Licinius, whom Galerius had appointed as Augustus (r. 308–324 CE). Licinius married Constantine's sister Constantia, and the two emperors agreed on religious toleration, which ended any risk for Christians, who had experienced the Great Persecution of Diocletian and Galerius. After this meeting, Licinius turned east and defeated Maximinus Daia, leaving just two emperors for the next decade (314–324 CE): Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East.

Throughout that decade, Constantine became a patron of the church. Christians obtained influence with the emperor, who was advised by Bishop Hosius of Cordova.

Constantine granted Christian clergy an exemption from burdensome service on city councils and gave judicial authority to bishops, allowing Christians to turn to episcopal courts for justice. He removed penalties in Roman law for celibacy and childlessness, banned gladiatorial combat, tightened divorce laws, and declared Sunday a day of rest.

Constantine also provided land and buildings for the church, making use of the architectural form of the imperial audience hall (the "basilica") that was to become standard in Western ecclesiastical architecture. The emperor gave a property known as the Lateran to the bishop of Rome, which became the episcopal residence, and Constantine built other churches in the city and began building the first Basilica of Saint Peter on Vatican Hill across the Tiber River. Constantine also built other important churches beyond Rome, including in the Holy Land and at Constantinople.

Constantine wanted to support the church but was quickly confronted by the enduring problem that not all Christians embraced the same Christianity. The first challenge came from North Africa, where Christian communities were torn asunder by the Donatist Controversy, over whether to accept clergy who had surrendered scriptures during the great persecution and to recognize the validity of their ordinations of new clergy; Donatists did not. Disputes over the validity of such appointments split the church, which appealed to Constantine and set a precedent for imperial intervention in ecclesiastical disagreements. Constantine summoned councils of church leaders at Rome in 313 CE and Arles in 314 CE, both of which ruled against the Donatists, but this did not bring the problem to an end.

Tensions between the two emperors continued to mount, and Licinius renewed the persecution of Christians in the East. In 324 CE, Constantine marched against his rival emperor, whom he defeated at Chrysopolis, just across the Bosporus from the city of Byzantium, and united the empire under a single emperor. Constantine created a monument to his victory by establishing a new city, Constantinople, on the site of the city of Byzantium. Constantinople was completed and inaugurated on May 11, 330 CE. This "New Rome" was given a senate and a free grain distribution (for 80,000), along with baths and a hippodrome, a forum, grand imperial monuments, and churches. The city was a monument to the emperor's victory and offered the geographical advantage of Nicomedia, which was between the Danube and the eastern frontiers but was not associated with any other emperor. This locality also had the advantage of its position on the Bosporus and was located on a peninsula surrounded by water on three sides, adding a defensive benefit.

As had previously occurred in the West, Constantine received news of theological controversy that was raging in the church. This eastern controversy stemmed from disagreements over the relationship of God the Father and the Son (Christ), which began with an Alexandrian priest named Arius. Arius taught that the Son was a created, subordinate being to the Father and not coequal or coeternal. This theological position is called Arianism, named after its founder, and it won many adherents among eastern bishops. For the opponents of Arianism, the Son was eternally begotten from the Father's own substance and was not a created being. Local councils in Egypt and Palestine considered Arius's view, with one supporting and one opposing.

Constantine, not fully grasping the complexity of the theological problem, called the Church of Alexandria to just get along, but to no effect. And so, in 325 CE, Constantine summoned bishops to a council at Nicaea, close to the site of Constantinople (then not yet completed), and paid for their travel. Several hundred were in attendance, with tradition (if not history) assigning 318 as the total. The emperor opened the council and influenced its proceedings. The Council of Nicaea condemned Arianism and decreed that the Son was of the same substance or nature (*homoousios* in Greek) as the Father. The council issued a creed, a statement that the faithful could recite and easily memorize to learn *correct* theology. The council also took up other issues, establishing rules (called canons) on discipline and practice, including the calculation for the correct date for Easter, over which there had been disagreement, on ecclesiastical jurisdiction and governance, and various rules for clergy. This was the First Ecumenical Council, and the precedent again was set that it was the prerogative of the emperor to call one.

The council deposed the priest Arius and bishops who refused to accept the Nicene decision, but Constantine later began to waver in this judgment, reinstating Arius and Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia by 327 CE. Constantine wanted to establish peace in the church but was not able to accomplish this, particularly in the face of formidable and unyielding opponents of Arianism, like Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, whom Constantine exiled to Trier in 335 CE.

Constantine continued the administrative reforms that began with Diocletian, and in some cases it is not clear which emperor initiated a reform. He created the office of quaestor, who drafted imperial laws, and the master of offices, who became the head of the civil administration. Constantine also completed the separation of civil and military positions that had begun under Diocletian. The senior officers of the administrative departments of his government were known as *comitates* ("companions") and accompanied the emperor as his court, serving on his imperial council (*consistorium*).

Constantine improved Diocletian's fiscal reforms by achieving stability of currency through a new gold coin, the *solidus* (Latin) or *nomisma* (Greek), which was minted at 72 to the Roman pound (approximately 330 grams). The confiscation of Licinius's treasury in 324 CE provided a convenient windfall to get this currency under way. The *nomisma* became the "dollar of the Middle Ages," serving as the premier currency in the Mediterranean region into the 11th century. Constantine also created a new silver coin minted at 1/24 of the *nomisma*, though it was difficult to keep the gold-silver ratio steady. Constantine continued Diocletian's tax system and added two new taxes: the *chrysargyron*, which fell on city dwellers who had escaped Diocletian's tax assessments, and the *follis*, which was a tax on senators. To manage imperial finances, the emperor created two new financial ministries: one, led by the Count of the Sacred Largesses (*comes sacrarum largitionum*), managed public expenditures, and the other, led by the Count of the Private Estate (*comes rei privatae*), managed imperial properties.

Constantine's military reforms also built on those of his predecessor. He created a mobile field army, the *comitatus*, which drew from troops stationed at the frontier,

known as *limitanei*. The former received higher pay and greater privileges, while the latter became limited in mobility and effectiveness. To oversee the troops, he created a master commander for the infantry and another for the cavalry, which later merged together into a new post called master of soldiers (*magister militum*). While Constantine completed the separation of civil and military authority, removing any military command from the praetorian prefect, the latter maintained responsibility for the provision of rations, arms, and recruits for the army.

Attending to the succession, Constantine proclaimed his sons Crispus and Constantine II as Caesars in 317 CE, a third son, Constantius, in 324 CE, and a fourth, Constans, in 333 CE. At his wife Fausta's instigation, Constantine had his son Crispus, a son by Constantine's first wife, Minervina, executed. When her accusations against Crispus proved false, the emperor sentenced Fausta to death. Yet, she had cleared the way for her sons alone to rule.

In 337 CE, Constantine prepared for a military campaign against Persia, when he fell ill. He returned to Nicomedia, where he received baptism from Bishop Eusebius and died on May 22.

His reign has been the subject of intense debate and diverse interpretation, from his first biographer, Eusebius of Caesarea, in his fourth-century celebratory *Life of Constantine*, to the hostile pagan historian Zosimus in the fifth century and down to professional historians today, such as those listed below.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Master of Offices; *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; Diocletian; Justinian; *Key Events*: Nicaea, Council of; *Military*: *Comitatenses*; *Limitanei*; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); *Primary Documents*: Document 2; Document 3; Document 4; Document 5; Document 6; Document 24

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Cyril, Apostle to the Slavs.

See Methodius and Cyril, Apostles to the Slavs

Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE)

Diocletian was a Roman emperor from 284–305 CE. He was from the Latin-speaking province of Illyricum, though he was equally fluent in Latin and Greek. His home region was an important recruitment ground for the army, and Diocletian achieved the throne through a military career. His reign was utterly remarkable for stabilizing the empire after a half century of utter chaos. He inherited an empire on the brink of collapse and restored it through effective military leadership and organizational ability.

From the late second century, the Roman Empire faced the problems of simultaneous pressure on multiple frontiers and epidemic disease. Emperors of the Severan Dynasty (196–235 CE), whose power rested on their command of the military, continually campaigned on the frontiers against Germans and Persians, until the last emperor lost that control and was assassinated. This set off a period of 50 years of "barracks emperors" (235–284 CE), where military commanders repeatedly seized the throne, while pressure on the frontiers increased, with Germans on the Danube and in Persia the Sassanids (226–651 CE), a more aggressive and powerful ruling dynasty than their Parthian predecessors. Armies on the frontier wanted the imperial presence, and this further encouraged civil war between aspirants for the throne. To meet the financial needs of state, emperors began to devalue the currency, stimulating inflation, while epidemic disease and invasion took their heavy toll. In the 260s and 270s CE, separatist movements began breaking off pieces of the empire as independent units in the East (the Kingdom of Palmyra under Queen Zenobia) and in the West (Gaul, Spain, and Britain under a commander named Postumus).

Emperors struggled to address these challenges. Some, like Aurelian, attempted to use religion, promoting a god to bring unity, while others sought to eliminate nefarious groups who were reputed to bring punishment from heaven, and Christians faced their first empire-wide persecutions in this period. Such attempts all ended with the violent deaths of the emperors but offered a hint of what would transpire under Diocletian and Constantine in subsequent decades.

In 283 CE, Emperor Carus was killed fighting the Persians, and the army proclaimed his son, Numerian, as emperor. Before the army reached Nikomedia, however, Numerian was dead. Diocletian, the commander of an imperial bodyguard called the *Protectores*, was then proclaimed emperor on November 20, 284 CE. It first appeared that Diocletian would simply be another barracks emperor as he faced the wrath of Carinus, another son of Carus, who refused to accept this turn of events. Carinus marched against Diocletian but was felled by an assassin. Soon, a rebellion against Diocletian broke out in Britain and, later, in Egypt as well.

To address such challenges, Diocletian took a revolutionary step of appointing a trusted colleague to serve as fellow emperor, with Diocletian holding the East as Augustus (senior emperor) and Maximian, a fellow Illyrian, serving as Caesar (junior emperor) in the West. Each emperor maintained his own administrative court and military command, but they were closely bound as a team. Diocletian selected

Flavius Valerius Diocletianus (Diocletian) became emperor of Rome in 284 CE following the crisis of the third century—a time of great political and economic trouble. In an attempt to restore order, Diocletian instituted a college of four emperors to guard all borders of the empire. To promote economic stability and fight inflation, he introduced a new solid silver coin, the *argenteus* pictured above. Unlike many emperors before him, he willingly abandoned his imperial office in 305 CE to spend a peaceful life at his palace in Croatia. (Yale University Art Gallery)

Nicomedia as his capital in the East. Diocletian's preference for the East reflects the priority of this region of the Roman Empire, which had a larger population, was wealthier, and counted more troops. Twenty-three legions were stationed in the East, defending the Danube and Persian frontiers, with Diocletian's capital of Nicomedia at a midway point between the frontiers. Maximian wielded only 11 legions and kept Milan in northern Italy as his imperial center.

In 286 CE, Diocletian promoted Maximian to Augustus to bolster his authority and then, in 293 CE, Diocletian added two additional junior emperors, one for each Augustus. Galerius, another Illyrian, became Diocletian's Caesar, and Constantius became the Caesar for Maximian. To further strengthen the bonds of loyalty, each Augustus adopted his Caesar. Each emperor had his own court, administrative, staff, and mobile army, and the imperial center was wherever an emperor resided, most commonly in cities close to the frontiers: Milan in northern Italy, Trier in Gaul, Sirmium and Thessalonica in the Balkans, and Nicomedia and Antioch in the East. Rome, by this time, was a showpiece and no longer an actual center of political power. Diocletian's system was effective, and internal challenges to Diocletian's power were suppressed, both in the West and the East, and peace was also secured on the frontiers. In the 19th century, historians began to call this system of four emperors, with two senior and two junior, the tetrarchy ("rule by four"), and the name has remained, though it was not called this in late antiquity.

Beyond establishing four legitimate emperors and four courts for each emperor, Diocletian initiated a series of governmental reforms that greatly strengthened imperial control and transformed the administrative apparatus of the Roman state. Diocletian reduced the size and doubled the number of provinces, from approximately 50 to

100, 55 of which were in the East, and completely separated civil and military authority. These provinces were grouped into larger units, each of which was called a *diocese*, 12 of which existed in the empire: 6 in the East and 6 in the west. Each *diocese* was led by a *vicar* who, in turn, reported to the praetorian prefect, who oversaw the civil administration and tax collection for each emperor. The reforms vastly increased the size of the imperial government, which expanded to 30,000–35,000 paid officials.

Diocletian also reformed the army's effectiveness by reducing the size of individual units, now averaging around 1,000, which was much smaller than the legions of old, providing greater flexibility, while he increased the total number under arms to more than 500,000. Military commanders known as dukes (*duces*), separate from provincial governors, held military command over units that spanned two or three provinces. The bulk of this army was stationed on the frontier, while a mobile field army stayed with each emperor.

The army was always the largest expense of the Rome state, and the larger military along with the larger imperial government greatly increased the empire's fiscal burden. To meet the needs of state, Diocletian initiated several fiscal reforms, paramount of which was a new system of taxation. The empire now taxed through a combination of acreage (*iugatio*) and headcount (*capitatio*). A *caput* was a personal unit for taxation, and the *jugum* was a unit of land whose value differed based on the quality of the land. Each year, the praetorian prefect would predict the needs of state for the coming year and set a tax rate per *jugum* and *caput*, with taxes due in September. This required an accurate accounting of land and a census, which was called an *indiction*, the first of which was completed in 296 CE, with regular updates expected every five years. To preserve revenues, the state began to bind farmers to the land. Tax demands passed from the praetorian prefect to the vicars, then governors, and finally to city councilors, or *decurions*, who had the primary responsibility for collecting taxes and the obligation to cover shortcomings. The financial burden on *decurions* increased throughout late antiquity and was made worse by the exception that senators, imperial officials, and army commanders, and later clergymen, received from such service. Diocletian's reform of the currency was less effective. He reintroduced gold, silver, and bronze currency but could not stem inflation. His Edict of Maximum Prices in 301 CE, which set process for thousands of goods and services, did not solve the problem.

Along with these administrative and military reforms, Diocletian employed religion and ceremony to enhance the imperial office. He added a religious dimension to this tetrarchy, referring to himself as Jovius (son of Jupiter) and to Maximian, his fellow Augustus in the West, as Herculius (son of Hercules, who was the son of Jupiter). Diocletian also drew on Persian ceremony, instituting the protocol of prostration before the *dominus* ("Lord"), while demanding that his officials stand in his presence, hence the term *consistorium* ("standing council") to refer to the imperial court.

Diocletian adhered to traditional Roman religion. In 299 CE, sacrifices at court in Nicomedia were found to be ineffective and the blame passed to Christians, who rejected traditional Roman beliefs. Previous emperors had persecuted Christians, but there had been no imperial persecution since 260 CE. Diocletian already expelled Christians from the court and army and then issued a series of edicts closing churches,

confiscating scriptures, arresting clergy, and demanding a general sacrifice by all subjects of the empire. This Great Persecution was motivated by his Caesar, Galerius, and would outlast the reign of Diocletian, ending only with Galerius's death in 311 CE.

In 305 CE, having reigned for 21 years, Diocletian retired and passed his days in his palace in Split (today's Croatia). He compelled his longtime friend Maximian also to retire. Constantius in the West and Galerius in the East were each promoted to the rank of Augustus, and two new Caesars were appointed: Severus, a friend of Galerius, in the West and Maximian Daia, a nephew of Galerius, in the East. The new tetrarchy excluded Maxentius, the son of the retired Maximian, and Constantine, the son of the Augustus Constantius. This exclusion would fuel a new series of conflicts that would end the tetrarchy and see the final triumph of Constantine. Yet, Diocletian's administrative and military reforms would remain intact and provided a solid foundation on which Constantine and the Roman Empire would build.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Organization and Administration*: Province; Taxes; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians

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Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 329–390 CE)

Gregory of Nazianzus was a theologian, poet, and patriarch of Constantinople from 379–381 CE. He was in a triad of fourth-century church leaders and theologians from Cappadocia (in Anatolia) who had a profound influence on the theological and institutional development of Christianity in late antiquity and beyond. These Cappadocian Fathers were Gregory of Nazianzus, along with his lifelong friend Basil of Caesarea, and Basil's younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa. The Cappadocian fathers, particularly through Gregory's theological interpretation and explanation of Nicene theology, played a pivotal role in articulating and explaining the doctrine of the Trinity (One God in three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), which was confirmed by the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381 CE. It has even been argued that it was Gregory who expressed the doctrine most clearly and influentially, which is nearly universally accepted in Christianity today. By the fifth century, if not before, Gregory was given the title "the theologian," by which he is commonly referred

(as Gregory the Theologian), because of his theological precision and the skill in which he taught.

Gregory was born in Cappadocia near Nazianzus around 329 CE to an aristocratic provincial family. His father, Gregory, converted to Christianity under the influence of his wife, who came from a Christian family. Gregory met Basil at school in Cappadocian Caesarea. Gregory's studies continued at Caesarea in Palestine and at Alexandria in Egypt. The two reunited while both were pursuing higher studies in Athens. Gregory returned to Cappadocia around 357 CE and joined Basil in his newly formed monastic community, supporting his friend's efforts to develop a guiding rule for monastic life. Gregory was greatly attracted to the tranquil contemplative life and monastic retreat, but throughout his life he would be pulled away from this and recruited into active service through leadership appointments that required tremendous work and incessant battle. This pull first began when his Gregory's father, who had become the bishop of Nazianzus, wanted his son to assist him in his episcopal duties, particularly as age was taking its toll. The father and bishop ordained his son as priest in 362 CE, despite Gregory's protests. Unwilling to accept this obligation, Gregory fled back to Basil's monastic community but eventually relented and accepted the burden of his new post. Gregory wrote an account of this period in his *Apology for his Flight*, which, like John Chrysostom's *On Priesthood*, is a treatise that reflects on the importance of the priesthood.

While Gregory performed his duties as priest, his friend Basil was serving as bishop of Caesarea and actively opposed the Christian theology of Arianism, which then prevailed in Constantinople with the support of Emperor Valens. The imperial administration attempted to intimidate Basil into yielding to Arian theology, but the bishop stood firm, much to the emperor's surprise, and Valens backed down. To weaken Basil's influence, Valens divided Cappadocia into two ecclesiastical provinces, reducing Basil's control and setting up a rival bishop nearby. To counter this, Basil created new bishoprics and dragooned his friend Gregory of Nazianzus, who was wholly unwilling, to serve as bishop of one of these. The situation paralleled the call to service by his father and met with the same reaction. Gregory did not take up the post directly but remained in Nazianzus. Upon the death of his father in 374 CE, Gregory assumed the duties of tending to the See of Nazianzus for a year, before retiring again for a period of monastic contemplation in Seleucia. His contemplative time was again cut short, by the death of Emperor Valens in 378 CE. Gregory was now called upon to become the bishop of Constantinople and to lead the city's transition from Arian to Orthodox Christianity. His partner and supporter was Orthodox Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE), who called the Second Ecumenical Council, which met in Constantinople in May 381 CE. Gregory's time as patriarch produced most of his *Orations*, which were highly influential, particularly the *Five Theological Orations* (27–31), which defended Nicene Christianity against Arian challenges and expounded on the Trinity, and other central matters of faith.

The council recognized Gregory as bishop, but he faced opposition from other bishops, including those from Egypt, who questioned the validity of his appointment, since he was already the bishop of another see. Rather than battle this opposition,

Gregory simply resigned and returned to Nazianzus, where he tended to this deceased father's episcopal province, until a new bishop was appointed. Gregory then finally retired to a monastic retreat on his family estate, where he spent the rest of his life dedicated to contemplative pursuits and to writing. It was in this final period of his life that he composed his poems, around 400 of which survive. The poems were a means of purifying classical culture by Christianizing it, showing that Christian poetry could be as beautiful and powerful as the pagan poems of the classical culture. The poems also had a theological purpose: to defend Orthodoxy against heresy. The longest of these poems is an autobiography entitled *On His Own Life*, which traces his life from his birth at Nazianzus to his resignation as bishop of Constantinople. This, along with other autobiographical poems, offers remarkable insight into Gregory's thoughts and personal feelings, akin to Augustine's *Confessions* in the West. More than 240 letters of Gregory also exist, shedding additional insight on contemporary events as well as his own personal reflections.

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See also: *Individuals*: Basil of Caesarea; *Groups and Organizations*: Cenobites; *Key Events*: Nicaea, Council of; Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople

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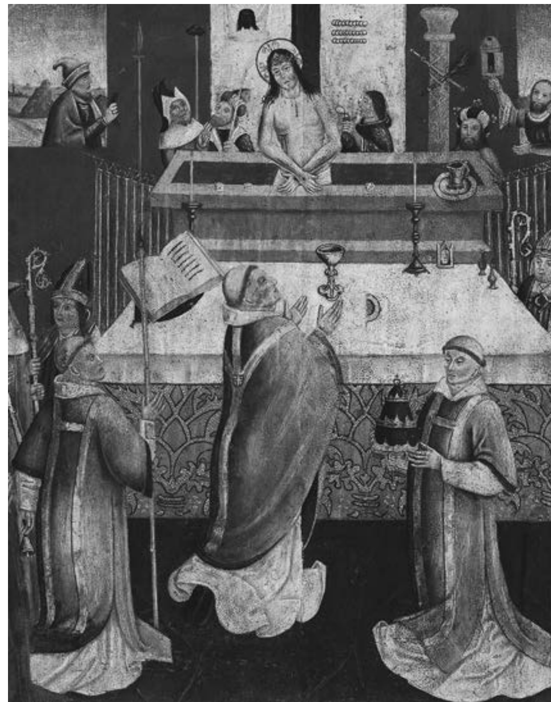
Gregory the Great (r. 590–604 CE)

Gregory was the bishop of Rome from 590 to 604 CE. He was the first monk to become bishop of Rome and became a patron of monasticism in the West. Gregory had a profound influence on the development of the medieval papacy and the spread of Roman Christianity in Western Europe. His missionary project to the Angles and Saxons in Britain brought this former Roman province back into the Christian fold and, more specifically, into the sphere of Roman Christianity, through the work of his missionary, Augustine of Canterbury. Gregory is one of only two popes whose impact was such that he was given the epithet "the Great." The title that Gregory used in his own lifetime, however, was *servus servorum Dei* (Servant of the Servants of God), which popes continued to use afterward.

To understand Gregory's pontificate, it is useful to consider the broader historical context. By the later fifth century, Rome had been removed from imperial control, when Odoacer deposed the last Roman emperor in the West. In the absence of imperial authority, bishops took on more civic responsibilities, even serving as

ambassadors, and the church at Rome became increasingly independent, though subject to local conflicts. This independence from imperial authority was further bolstered when theological differences officially separated Rome and Constantinople during the Acacian Schism (482–519 CE), which started when Emperor Zeno (r. 474–491 CE) issued the *Henoticon* ("edict of union"), which did not embrace the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon). It was during this schism, in fact, that Pope Gelasius (r. 492–496 CE) wrote to Emperor Anastasius (r. 491–518 CE) arguing that there were the two principles that governed the world: that of bishops and of kings, with the former superior. Much would be made of this "two swords" theory in later medieval history, and it reflected an existing tension between the Roman and the imperial view of the church-state relationship.

A dramatic change in this relationship occurred during the reign of Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), when imperial control over Italy was reestablished over Italy. The bishop of Rome now operated in the shadow of imperial power, which deposed one pope and selected two others during the emperor's reign. This domination faded after Justinian. In 568 CE, Germanic Lombards invaded Italy and the peninsula became contested between various Lombard authorities, with imperial authority limited to southern Italy, coast cities like Amalfi and Naples, and a swath of territory between Ravenna and Rome that was squeezed by Lombard power. As the empire's grip on Italy weakened, Rome became an increasingly critical hub for communication and negotiation, and the pope, in turn, maintained a direct line of communication with Constantinople through a representative (*apocrisiarius*) in the imperial capital.



Gregory the Great was Pope from 590 to 604 CE. He was a prodigious writer and one of the greatest fathers of the Roman Catholic Church. Some of his most notable achievements include his reform of existing Church worship and his missions to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxon English. His alliance with the orthodox Christian Franks eventually laid the foundations for the Christian kingdoms of Western Europe. (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

It was into this world that Gregory was born at Rome to a distinguished aristocratic family around 540 CE. His formative years overlapped with Emperor Justinian's war in Italy, which

devastated the peninsula, lasting from 535 until 554 CE. Gregory initially pursued the goals of a Roman aristocrat, particularly one from such a distinguished family: his great-grandfather was Pope Felix (r. 483–492 CE) and he was also related to Pope Agapetus (r. 535–536 CE). Gregory served as prefect of Rome but then relinquished secular life and became a monk, transforming one of his family's estates into the Monastery of Saint Andrew and funding six additional monasteries. His idyllic time in monastic tranquility was broken by Pope Pelagius II, who recruited Gregory to serve as his papal ambassador in Constantinople. Gregory answered the call and served in Constantinople from 579 to 586 CE, during the reigns of Emperors Tiberius (r. 578–582 CE) and Maurice (r. 582–602 CE). It was a formative time in Gregory's development, which enabled him to observe the relationship between emperor and patriarch.

After Pelagius's death, Gregory was elected his successor as bishop of Rome in 590 CE, though he was reluctant to take on this position. By this time, Rome was independent of imperial control. Emperor Maurice had little energy for Italy, focusing all his attention on the threatened Persian and Balkan frontiers. Even the Byzantine exarch, or governor, in Ravenna, had limited influence. And so, the bishop of Rome became not only the city's ecclesiastical leader but also its governor. Gregory ensured the city's food supply, managed the flow of refugees from Italy, and negotiated directly with the Lombards for Rome's security. Such independent negotiations frustrated the imperial authorities in Ravenna and Constantinople. Gregory also preached, which educated and raised morale of Rome, which was harried by plague and foe. Gregory was a highly effective administrator who carefully managed episcopal lands and strengthened the organization of ecclesiastical properties throughout the West. His effort can be seen through his extensive correspondence.

Gregory clashed with the patriarch of Constantinople over the latter's use of the title "ecumenical" (meaning "universal"), which the bishop began using during the reign of Maurice. Gregory believed that this was an affront to Rome as well as to the other great patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, though the other sees were less concerned. While Maurice ignored Gregory's complaint, the usurper Phocas (r. 602–610 CE) was sympathetic, though for practical reasons: he was desperate to secure such prestigious support after his murder of Emperor Maurice and his family.

Gregory's literary legacy was extremely important for the Western church, particularly his biblical commentary, *Magna Moralia on Job*, and his *Dialogues*, which contains the first biography of Saint Benedict of Nursia, on whose career was founded Benedictine monasticism, the staple of Western, though not Eastern, monasticism. He also wrote the *Pastoral Rule* as a guide for how bishops should conduct themselves and their work. As important as this legacy was in the West, Gregory had no significant impact on the development of the Orthodox Church in the East.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Individuals*: Justinian; Maurice; Phocas; Zeno; *Groups and Organizations*: Cenobites; *Key Events*: *Henoticon*; Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Rome, Fall of

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Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE)

Heraclius was emperor of the Byzantine Empire from 610–641 CE. He led the Byzantine military through its final series of wars with the Persian Sassanid Empire and its initial large conflicts with Arab forces. This initial entry into warfare with the Arabs was influenced by the Byzantine defeat at the Battle of Yarmuk. Heraclius is also known for restoring what was believed to be the true Cross of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem and, in turn, became the first Roman emperor to visit the city.

Flavius Heraclius, often referred to as Heraclius the Younger by scholars, was born to a military father in 575 CE. Heraclius the Elder served various military posts throughout his career. Most notably, he was the *magister militum per Orentium* (commanding general in the East) and *magister militum per Aremniam* (commanding general in Armenia). Eventually, the Elder was promoted and relocated from the East of the empire to the position of exarch (military governor) of Africa. This was not unusual. The position in Africa held some prestige, having been held by senior Byzantine Generals Theoktisto, Artabanes, and Belisarius. Little is known about Heraclius the Younger's formal education. He was known to be rather smart. Historians deduce much of this came from spending time with his father and the knowledge the Elder imparted to his son.

This familial relationship was key to Heraclius the Younger's rise to power. The Elder's relationship with Emperor Maurice served as the impetus that put his son on the throne. The Elder enjoyed great success under Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE). After several military missteps in the Balkans, Maurice was forced to abdicate. Phocas was named Emperor (r. 602–610 CE). Eight years later, Heraclius and Nicetas staged a coup. They overthrew and executed Phocas.

Heraclius inherited an empire with an army in tatters. He broke with a two-century tradition and led his armies personally, but it didn't matter. The early part of his reign was pockmarked with military defeats and territorial concessions at the hands of the Persians. He was defeated by the Sassanid forces at Kushro and conceded

Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) seized the throne when the Byzantine Empire was on the brink of military and political disaster. Despite this, he established a dynasty that kept the empire alive through the turbulent seventh century, even though facing a vastly reduced territory and incessant military activity on all fronts. (Yale University Art Gallery)

a large swath of Byzantine territory as a result. In 614 CE, Jerusalem fell. Christians in the city were slaughtered, and the Cross that Christ was crucified on was taken as a war prize. Five years later, Egypt fell. Some historians mark 622 CE as the low point for the Roman Byzantine forces.

The following decade would be different. This was due in great part to internal strife in the Sassanid leadership. Various coups and infighting caused their empire to become extremely unstable. This provided Heraclius an opportunity to redeem himself and the Byzantine forces. In the early 620s CE, Heraclius regained most of the territory back from the Persians. He punctuated this string of victories with the restoration of Christ's Cross to Jerusalem. In doing this, he became the first Roman emperor to visit Jerusalem. Yet, there was a new enemy on the horizon.

Arab Islamic forces challenged both the Byzantine and Sassanid Empire. Arab forces defeated Heraclius's forces in Syria at the Battle of Yarmouk in 626 CE. Two years later Arabs defeated the Persians and sacked their capital. Jerusalem fell to Arab forces in 638 CE. Despite these peripheral losses, the core of the empire remained intact. The city of Constantinople, Anatolia, and the Balkans were secure. Unfortunately, the sun was setting on Heraclius's reign. His health began to fail him in the mid-630s CE and he passed in 641 CE.

Heraclius is an interesting study of juxtaposition among his contemporaries. Scholars acknowledge a cultural and political blur between the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Heraclius stands as a Byzantine emperor who was somewhat "more Roman" than his counterparts. This manifested itself in a variety of ways. First, there was his lineage. Many Byzantine emperors acquired their station through birth. Yet, their

military leaders emerged through a system marked by merit. One might serve in the military in an elevated position because of the family name but seldom lead troops for any length of time. Heraclius was the opposite. He was not in the royal family, yet his familial ties placed him at the head of armies. While being smart, he probably lacked the typical higher level of military expertise held by other Byzantine military leaders. His battlefield tactics and military theories were comparable. The Byzantine Empire was very dependent on a robust cavalry. Yet in battles like Yarmouk, Heraclius used a large infantry force. This is inherently more Roman than the practice of other "more Byzantine" generals.

The best assessment of Heraclius must be presented in two parts. As a politician and administrator, he obviously had some skill. He understood that there were parts of the empire his forces could not properly defend when he entered office. Hence, he conceded large areas of imperial territory early in his reign. He would regain much of this later when his army was reorganized. As a battlefield commander, his performance was somewhat dubious. His greatest victories were his acquisition of the throne and his defeat of the Persians. The first was achieved with the help of his father. The second was aided by the internal strife within the Sassanid Empire.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Belisarius; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with; *Objects and Artifacts*: True Cross

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Irene (r. 797–802 CE)

A native of Athens, Irene was the wife of Byzantine Emperor Leo IV (r. 775–780 CE) and the mother of Emperor Constantine VI (r. 780–797 CE), and she ruled independently from 797 to 802, the first woman to rule the Roman Empire as emperor. She is responsible for ending the first period of Iconoclasm in 787 CE and for the restoration of icon veneration through the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Her reign marked the conclusion of the Syrian Dynasty (717–802 CE).

Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE), founder of the Syrian Dynasty, ended a period of political turmoil, brought stability to the throne, and put the empire's defenses on

sure footing. He withstood the Arab assault on Constantinople in 717–718 CE and defeated Arab invasions of Anatolia in 726 CE and 740 CE. Leo also instituted the religious policy of Iconoclasm ("Icon Breaking"), believing that the cause of the empire's defeat in previous decades had been divine retribution for violating the biblical injunction against "graven images." Leo's success on the battlefield seemed to be evidence for this belief. His son, Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), continued to provide such evidence, asserting Byzantine power in the Balkans over the Bulgars and crushing an Arab invasion in Anatolia in 774 CE. Constantine also created mobile field armies called *tagmata* and began reducing the provinces (*themata*) into smaller units whose commanders would each be less threatening to the central government. Constantine persecuted opponents of Iconoclasm and, in 754 CE, summoned a church synod that proclaimed Iconoclasm the religious law of the land, though without representation from the papacy, which had been condemning Iconoclasm for three decades.

Leo IV (r. 775–780 CE), son of Constantine V, continued the dynastic tradition of victory, which had become closely associated with Iconoclasm. Yet, despite three decades of Iconoclasm, support for icons was never eliminated. In fact, Leo's own wife, Irene, venerated icons. The emperor discovered this and brutally punished the chamberlains of the imperial palace who had smuggled them in for her use. He then distanced himself from his wife. Before anything more could happen, however, Leo IV unexpectedly died in 780 CE, under a cloud of suspicion.

The throne passed to his nine-year-old son, Constantine VI (r. 780–797 CE), with power held by the dowager empress. She successfully fended off plots against her and secured her position by promoting the loyal eunuch Stauracius to the position of *logothetes tou dromou* to manage state affairs and internal security. His loyalty was unquestioned and, as a eunuch, he posed little threat to her position. Irene also preferred employing a eunuch for military duties, distrusting leading male figures for such assignments, since they might directly challenge her or try to force her into marriage to assume the throne. Thus, facing the invasion of Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Raschid in 782 CE, Irene entrusted the defense of the state to Stauracius, who performed well but was betrayed by a jealous general, which cost the empress an enormous ransom to restore her commander. The betrayal was evidence that Irene could not rely on traditional leaders whose agendas differed from hers. Irene later sent Stauracius to the Balkans, where he asserted Byzantine power against the Slavs and strengthened administrative structures between the capital and the Greek peninsula from 783–784 CE.

Stauracius's accomplishments in the Balkans established at least a credible military foundation that Irene needed to secure her position and to begin moving against Iconoclasm. Upon the death of Paul, the Iconoclast patriarch of Constantinople (r. 780–784 CE), she appointed her imperial secretary (*asekretis*), Tarasius, who was a layman, as the new patriarch (r. 784–806 CE). He was a senator and, like Stauracius, a trusted member of the imperial administration. Tarasius accepted the post with the understanding that an ecumenical council would be summoned to overturn the Council of 754 CE. For this project, Irene gained the support of Pope Hadrian I (r. 772–795 CE),

though he censured Tarasius for his unseemly promotion from layman to patriarch and for using "ecumenical" as part of his title (which bishops of Constantinople had been using since the sixth century). The pope also wanted a restoration of papal estates that Emperor Leo III had confiscated and a return of papal jurisdiction over the Balkans, which Leo III had transferred to Constantinople. The emperor had those requests removed from the Greek translation of the pope's Latin letter.

Empress Irene rose to power as the wife of the last Iconoclast emperor and brought the first phase of Iconoclasm to an end by summoning the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 CE. Irene dominated the reign of her son, Emperor Constantine VI (r. 780–797 CE) and then pushed him aside to rule in her own name from 797 to 802 CE. Her reign witnessed the revival of a "Roman Empire" in the West, when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne, king of the Franks, as emperor of the Romans in Rome on December 25, 800 CE. This increased tensions between Constantinople and Rome and led to a coup that removed Irene from power, ending the Isaurian (or Syrian) Dynasty (717–802 CE). (Luisa Ricciarini/Leemage/Bridgeman Images)

In August 786 CE, Empress Irene and Emperor Constantine VI opened the Seventh Ecumenical Council in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. The council's proceedings were completely disrupted when imperial troops of the *tagmata*, who remained loyal to the memory of the ever-victorious Emperor Constantine V and to Iconoclasm, charged into the building, shouting and making demands. Irene managed to extract the troops from the capital by pretending that they were needed for a military expedition against an Arab army, and once in the provinces, she had them demobilized by loyal soldiers. To prevent future trouble, Irene moved the location of the council out of Constantinople to Nicaea, where the First Ecumenical Council had taken place in 325 CE. The Seventh Ecumenical Council reconvened in autumn 787 CE and officially declared that icon veneration was orthodox doctrine, proclaiming Irene and her son, Constantine VI, as the new Helena and Constantine I.

Irene reunited Constantinople and Rome by ending the schism that had begun with Emperor Leo III, when he embraced Iconoclasm. In the interim, the papacy had shifted its political focus from Constantinople to the Franks of the Carolingian Dynasty, to whom popes began to turn for protection. Irene had hoped to bring the Carolingian and Byzantine Empires closer together by arranging for Constantine to marry Rotrud, the daughter of Charlemagne, king of the Franks. Unfortunately, this did not have the hoped-for effect because Charlemagne refused to allow his daughter to leave his side. Adding to the trouble, the two powers clashed over interests in Italy and the Adriatic. The rift was so wide that Charlemagne even refused to accept the ruling of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, but this did not affect his alliance with the papacy.

While Irene was managing the state, her son, Constantine, began to assert his desire to rule. In 790 CE, he launched a (failed) plot against his mother's ally Stauracius, and Irene punished the young man with house arrest, but commanders of the themes demanded that the nineteen-year-old emperor be allowed to rule. The empress yielded. Constantine exiled his mother from the palace, took the reins of state in hand, and then failed miserably, so much so that he brought his mother back to the palace by 792 CE. He needed her, but their relationship was tense.

In 795 CE, Constantine divorced his wife, Maria, and married a second time. Since the validity of his grounds for divorce were in doubt and second marriages were considered in very bad form, influential monastic authorities, Abbot Plato of Saccudium and his nephew Theodore, who later became the abbot of Studius in Constantinople, publicly criticized the emperor for a violation of canon law. This was the Moechian (meaning "Adulterous") Controversy, which greatly tarnished the emperor's reputation. Constantine punished the outspoken monks with prison and exile, but the effect of this worked against him and strengthened the hand of Irene, whom the monks supported.

With Constantine's position weakened, Irene took a drastic final step. In 797 CE, she ordered her son arrested and blinded, and he died shortly thereafter. Irene now ruled as the sole emperor, the first woman to rule the Roman Empire. She welcomed the exiled monks and became their patron, benefiting from an association with such esteemed figures, who, like the eunuchs, posed no threat to her position. She also excommunicated the priest who had presided over the marriage of her son and his second wife.

In foreign affairs, Irene's reign was marked by a return of Arab assaults and a notable showdown with the Carolingian Empire. On December 25, 800 CE, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as emperor, reviving an imperial claim in the West that had been dormant for more than three centuries. From the Byzantine perspective, this was an outrage, a claim on the imperial title that was rightfully controlled by Constantinople, where Irene was already on the throne. The papacy, however, argued that as a woman, Irene could not hold the throne, and so, the position was vacant. The diplomatic wrangling continued, and Charlemagne offered to marry Irene as a resolution to imperial tensions. Unfortunately, the proposal disturbed leading officials around Irene, whose hold on power was reliant on alliances with palace eunuchs,

clergy, and monks. Military commanders mobilized against her, arrested Irene, and declared Nicephorus, the highly able minister of finance (*logothetes tou genikou*), emperor in 802 CE. Irene was exiled to a provincial convent, where she lived out her remaining days.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Leo III, the Isaurian; *Key Events*: Charlemagne, Coronation of; Iconoclastic Controversy; *Military*: *Tagmata*

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Julian the Apostate (r. 361–363 CE)

Julian was a Roman emperor from 361–363 CE and the final ruling member of the family of Constantine. Christians later affixed the epithet “the Apostate” to his name because Julian renounced Christianity and sought to restore the empire to its traditional religious beliefs. His life and controversial reign are surprisingly well documented. Ammianus Marcellinus, who served with Julian in Gaul and Persia, dedicated much of his history to recounting the career of Julian, whom he admired. The pagan rhetorician Libanius, who was the teacher of John Chrysostom, as well as a close friend of Julian’s, dedicated orations in the emperor’s honor. We can even hear the voice of Julian himself through volumes of his letters and his philosophical and polemical treatises, which have been preserved. In addition, since Christians spoke ill of this last pagan emperor, they recounted his actions in vivid and extensive, if not always accurate, detail.

On May 22, 337 CE, Emperor Constantine I died in Nicomedia, leaving power in the hands of his sons, all of whom were Caesars: Constantine in Gaul, Spain, and Britain; Constans in Italy, North Africa, and the Balkans; and Constantius in Asia Minor and the East. Constantine also had nephews in authority: Dalmatius, who was also a Caesar, ruling over Thrace, Macedonia, and Achaea, and Hannibalianus, who oversaw Pontus in northeastern Anatolia. The army, most likely prompted by Constantius, declared that only the sons of Constantine should rule and, in September 337 CE, massacred Hannibalianus, Dalmatius, and every other male descendent of Constantine’s father, Constantius. The sons of Constantine were each acclaimed as an Augustus and ruled as equals. Two boys were spared in the massacre, because of their youth: Gallus, who was 12, and Julian, who was 6. They were sons of Julius Constantius,

Constantine's half brother, who had also been murdered in the massacre, along with the boys' older brother.

Gallus and Julian were entrusted to Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia and then sent to an imperial estate in Cappadocia, where they spent six years under the supervision of George of Cappadocia. Julian continued his studies of rhetoric and philosophy beyond this period, learning in various cities of Anatolia and eventually making his way to Athens. It was in this "university town" that he met the Cappadocian friends and later bishops, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, who were also students. It seems to have been in this period of study that Julian converted from Christianity to paganism, though he made no public pronouncement. Julian detested the linguistic awkwardness and ignorance of the Christian scriptures in contrast to the refinement and power of classical Greek literature, and he equally loathed his uncle Constantine and the religion that he had supported.

While Julian was immersed in his studies, fraternal conflict and civil war led to the deaths of Emperors Constantine II in 340 CE and Constans in 350 CE, leaving Constantius alone as emperor. To govern the empire, Constantius needed a partner, paralleling Diocletian's experience in 285 CE. In March 351 CE, the emperor appointed his cousin Gallus, Caesar in the East, while Constantius went to the West to suppress the revolt that had killed Constans. Strengthening the tie between them, Constantius had Gallus marry the emperor's sister. The promotion failed to achieve its expected results, hampered by Constantius's suspicion and anger, and Gallus was executed by Constantius in 354 CE.

Since the empire faced major challenges on the Rhine frontier in the West and the Persian frontier in the East, Constantius could not do without an imperial colleague.

Julian ruled from 361 to 363 CE and was the final emperor of the dynasty of Constantine and the only one who spurned Christianity and embraced paganism. For this rejection, Christians subsequently referred to him as "the Apostate." Whereas coins of the era present clean-shaven emperors, Julian here is depicted with the beard of a pagan philosopher. (Yale University Art Gallery)

He now turned to Gallus's brother, Julian, the last male member of his family, who was then studying in Athens. Constantius summoned Julian to Milan in 355 CE, where he promoted him to Caesar and sent him to Gaul, while Constantius returned to the East. Julian was 23 years old. Despite his inexperience, Julian won the affection of his troops, though he quarreled with officers appointed by Constantius, and successfully restored order by pushing the Germans back across the Rhine. Julian's victory at the Battle of Strasburg in 357 CE was so overwhelming that it secured the frontier for another half century.

In the East, Constantius was challenged by Shapur II, the powerful and aggressive Sassanid shah of Persia, and ordered Julian to send troops. The army, however, did not want to go and responded by acclaiming Julian as Augustus in 360 CE, though this may have been arranged by Julian himself. Constantius rejected Julian's declaration of innocence and his attempted negotiations to resolve the situation without bloodshed and once again set out to suppress another uprising in the West, this one by his own cousin. Julian began preparation for the coming civil war, when Constantius died suddenly on November 3, 361 CE. Julian, at 29 years of age, became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire and now revealed his religious beliefs.

As emperor, Julian canceled the anti-pagan legislation of Constantine, reopened temples and restored their lands, and resumed public sacrifices. Mirroring the structure of the Christian Church, Julian appointed high priests for each province and chief priests for each city. He also decreed a toleration of all forms of Christianity and recalled exiled bishops, knowing that Christians of different theological inclinations would vehemently and even violently attack one another. Julian also banned Christians from teaching. Classical literature and philosophy was the foundation of education in the Roman Empire, a requirement for service in the civil administration, and an expectation for cultured citizens. Since Christians rejected the gods that the authors of the classical texts believed in, Julian explained, then they should not teach these texts. As another blow against Christianity, he encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

As emperor, Julian sought to purge the state of corruption, restore cities, and revive the curial order (local town councils), which had been under duress for more than a century. He reduced the size and burden of the central government by eliminating unnecessary positions and cut palace staff, in keeping with his own ascetic tendencies.

Julian spent much of 362 CE at Antioch, preparing for his campaign against Persia. The stay was not a pleasant one as the relationship between the largely Christian city and the emperor was tense, particularly as gathering troops required resources also needed by the city. Julian antagonized Christians by removing Christian relics from the grounds of the temple of Apollo, which was later set ablaze. The emperor reacted by closing the city's cathedral.

Julian set out for Persia in March 363 CE, with an enormous army of more than 60,000. He was victorious against the Sassanids and appeared before the Persian capital of Ctesiphon. Realizing that he could not storm this well-defended city, Julian shifted his army north, but was wounded in a skirmish and died on June 26, 363 CE.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with; *Primary Documents*: Document 9; Document 10

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Justinian (r. 527–565 CE)

Emperor Justinian, who reigned from 527 to 565 CE, was one of the most influential rulers in the history of the Byzantine Empire. Whether considering his building projects, such as Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, his reconquest of vast territories in the western Mediterranean, his sponsoring of a compilation of Roman law known as the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, his active involvement in the religious sphere, including calling the Fifth Ecumenical Council, or his place in the era's cultural achievements, the emperor dominated to an extent that it is reasonable to refer to the sixth century as the "age of Justinian."

Flavius Petrus Sabbatius was born to a "working class" family in a Latin-speaking part of the western Balkans around 482 CE. His uncle Justin had abandoned provincial life for Constantinople, where he obtained employment in an imperial guard unit known as the *Excubitors*. With this remarkable elevation in status, Justin brought his nephew, who then took the name Justinian, to the capital. There, the boy received a superior education and was enrolled in another imperial guard unit known as the *Candidati*. Justin became the head of the *Excubitors* and, when Emperor Anastasius died without an heir in 518 CE, became emperor himself.

Justinian's ability, intelligence, and tireless work ethic made him the most valued adviser to his uneducated uncle and the reign of Justin was truly the opening act in the "age of Justinian." Justinian was promoted to Count of Domestics and then to master of soldiers in the Imperial Presence and eliminated all rivals to his uncle's position. One potential rival was Vitalian, who had led a pro-Chalcedonian revolt against Emperor Anastasius. Vitalian was restored to honor, receiving appointment as master of soldiers, and honored with a consulship in 520 CE. Yet, he "disappeared" before his consulship ended, and Justinian became consul in the following year, currying favor with the people by sponsoring lavish entertainments.

Vitalian's initial restoration was a sign that Justin had reversed his predecessor's religious policy, which had been the cause of Vitalian's rebellion. Justin repealed the *Henoticon*, which had been imperial policy since 482 CE, and by doing so, declared that he accepted the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Council of Chalcedon) and rejected Monophysite ("one nature") theology. With this move, the religious schism between Constantinople and Rome officially ended in 519 CE.

The reunion with Rome had important political ramifications. The Ostrogothic Kingdom of Italy, like the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa, embraced Arian Christianity, which rejected the theology established by the First and Second Ecumenical Councils. This religious difference created a barrier between the Orthodox subjects of Italy and Africa and their Germanic overlords. The separation between Constantinople and Rome worked to the benefit of Italy's Ostrogothic ruler, King Theodoric. The reunion, however, made Theoderic suspicious of collusion between Roman elites and Constantinople. He arrested various Roman senators, including Boethius, whose *Consolation of Philosophy* was composed while he awaited execution in 524 CE.

Justin died in 527 CE and power passed seamlessly to his nephew and heir, Justinian, who was then in his mid-40s. Justinian's goal, which was manifest in his laws and policies, was a renewal of the Roman Empire, a restoration to its past greatness, and he worked tirelessly in every possible arena of state to achieve this, though with varying degrees of success. His partner in this project was his wife, Theodora, whom he had married after the death of Empress Euphemia (Justin's wife), who held fast to an

SAINT POLYEUCTUS OF ANICIA JULIANA

Anicia Juliana was a member of an eminent and long-established aristocratic family. She was the daughter of Western Emperor Olybrius (472 CE) and the great-great-grand-daughter of Emperor Theodosius I (379–395 CE). Her husband, Aerobindus, was championed by the people of Constantinople to replace Emperor Anastasius during the massive riot of 512 CE, though he remained loyal to the emperor. On Anastasius's death in 518 CE, her son Olybrius was a competitor for the imperial throne but lost out to the commander of the imperial guard, Justin. Though her family did not achieve imperial status in Constantinople, she broadcast her influence by building the Church of Saint Polyeuctus, dedicated to a Christian martyr from the second century. She built this on the site of a church that had been constructed by her great-grandmother Empress Eudocia. Anicia Juliana's monument was then the largest church in Constantinople, and the church's dedicatory poem praised her aristocratic lineage and directly linked her construction of the structure to that of King Solomon and his temple in Jerusalem. Emperor Justinian, whose family boasted no such aristocratic lineage, directly challenged and even overshadowed her boast by building a church of even greater status—Hagia Sophia, which was completed in 537 CE.

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imperial law banning marriage between senators and actresses. After her death, Justin promulgated a law that allowed marriage between *repentant* actresses and senators, and the couple married. To help in his project of renewal, Justinian selected senior officials for their ability and loyalty, rather than for any elite ancestry. Like him, central figures, such as his wife, Theodora, his prefect, John the Cappadocian, the jurist Tribonian, and Generals Belisarius and Narses, among others, were from humble origins.

Justinian sought to improve the efficiency of the state bureaucracy by reforming and standardizing law, suppressing corruption, improving tax collection, and eliminating governmental structures that were deemed wasteful or redundant. In addition to the political and economic impact of these reforms, the work was used to project an ideological message that the emperor was the divinely appointed ruler, guiding the state with heavenly support, and returning it to its past grandeur.

A vigorous administrator, Justinian was actively involved in the daily affairs of the empire and sought to guarantee that state institutions and policies would not be subverted for private gain. Justinian forbade the sale of state positions, such as provincial governorships, increased the pay of many officials (as a means of undermining

This sixth-century image of Emperor Justinian is located in the Church of Saint Vitale in Ravenna, the Byzantine capital of Italy. The image shows the emperor holding a golden bowl, surrounded by civil officials and soldiers as well as church leaders, including the city's bishop, to his left. Note the emperor's clothing, particularly his crimson shoes, a mark of imperial status, along with crown and halo. (Fabio Lotti/Dreamstime.com)

corruption), and abolished positions deemed unnecessary, including an entire level of provincial administration called the diocese, which stood between provincial government and the larger prefecture level and was led by an official known as a vicar. He also combined some smaller provinces, reducing the total number of officials, as a result, and increased the judicial authority of provincial officials to decrease the volume of appeals coming to the capital.

Justinian also used his authority to mold a moral and exclusive society, according to his vision. He banned brothels from Constantinople and ordered the death penalty for any who engaged in homosexual acts. He also condemned those who did not accept "correct" Christian teaching, persecuting pagans, Samaritans, and Manichaeans. Pagans were banned from teaching, and Justinian closed the Academy at Athens, whose teachers fled to Persia. Justinian also sought to restore unity in the church, which had been divided over Christology (the study of Christ's divine and human natures) since the Fourth Ecumenical Council in 451 CE. While Rome supported the decisions at Chalcedon, much of the East, particularly in Syria and Egypt, rejected it, preferring an anti-Chalcedonian theology known as Monophysite ("one nature"). This was both a theological and political problem, undermining church and imperial unity. Since it was Justinian's imperial responsibility to support and promote "correct" belief, he summoned the Fifth Ecumenical Council, which met at Constantinople in 551 CE, but this and his other efforts failed to create unity.

Soon after his accession to the imperial throne, Justinian assembled a commission, led by John the Cappadokian, to review and organize Roman law that had been issued from the time of Emperor Hadrian to Justinian. The commission produced the *Code of Justinian* in 529 CE. A second commission, led by the Quaestor Tribonian, produced an authorized legal commentary, the *Digest*, in 533 CE, along with an authoritative textbook for law students called the *Institutes*. In 534 CE, Tribonian's commission completed a correction and revision of the *Code*. Justinian's legislation continued after this codification and his new laws, called *Novels* (Latin *Novellae,* "new laws"), supplemented the *Code*. The *Code, Digest*, and *Institutes* were issued in Latin, but the *Novels* were in Greek. Taken together, the *Code, Digest*, *Institutes*, and *Novels* are referred to as the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (CJC), an achievement as grand as his monumental cathedral, Hagia Sophia.

Justinian's remarkable reign was threatened early by a massive urban revolt known as the Nika Revolt. The circus factions, known as the Blues and the Greens, had been increasing in violence since the reign of Anastasius, and it reached its zenith under Justinian. In January 532 CE, the city's prefect arrested rioters, both Blues and Greens, and ordered the execution of seven of them for murder. On January 10, three were ordered to be executed by hanging, but two of the condemned, one Blue and one Green, fell to the ground and were given refuge in a nearby church. On January 13, the gathered crowds in the Hippodrome called on the emperor to pardon them, but he refused. The mob turned angry, shouting "*nika*" ("victory"), and stormed downtown Constantinople, overrunning the prefect's headquarters and freeing all those detained inside. In the frenzy, buildings were set ablaze, which consumed the church of Hagia

Sophia, a Senate house, public baths, and even a portion of the imperial palace complex. The people's demands now extended to the removal of some of Justinian's highest officials, Praetorian Prefect John the Cappadocia and his quaestor, Tribonian, to which Justinian consented. Yet, the mob raged on. By January 15, the crowd began to call for a new emperor, while the imperial guard could not contain the increasing urban threat. On Sunday, January 18, Justinian appeared in the imperial box in the Hippodrome with Bible in hand to try to restore order by admitting his original error and pardoning the condemned. This show of contrition failed, and the people now called on Hypatius, a senator and nephew of Emperor Anastasius I, to become emperor. Many senators, sensing (or even hoping) that Justinian's reign was collapsing, rallied in support of Hypatius. Justinian was shaken by these events and considered yielding, but Theodora rejected this proposal, declaring death preferable to abandoning the imperial throne. Utilizing loyal commanders who had recently returned from the Persian frontier, he ordered Generals Belisarius and Mundo to storm the Hippodrome, where the crowd had gathered to acclaim Hypatius. A massacre ensued, while Hypatius and his brother, Pompeius, were arrested and then executed. The death toll was reported to be some 30,000. Such was the toll of imposing imperial order. Justinian would face no such urban trouble for well over a decade.

Justinian responded to the riots by punishing leading senators who had acquiesced to the opposition, confiscating their property and exiling them. In this way, Justinian emerged more secure after the riots than he was before. Long after, having safeguarded his imperial position, Justinian pardoned the senators and made restitution. Justinian also responded by building, which further manifested his "renewal" ideology. On the rubble of the former cathedral, emerged the magnificent Church of Hagia Sophia ("Holy Wisdom"), which was completed in 537 CE and remains the most iconic

SILK DIPLOMACY

The Byzantine state strictly regulated the purchase, production, and use of silk, which was an important symbol of wealth and status in Byzantium, with silk dyed purple reserved for the emperor and his family. Until the sixth century, the Mediterranean world's silk originated in China and was carried by merchants on long-distance trade routes through central Asia collectively known as the Silk Road. These routes ultimately passed through Persia, which reaped economic benefit by increasing the price before selling to Byzantine officials stationed at the frontier. To maintain its control, the Persian government banned Byzantine merchants from the Sassanian eastern frontier, lest they develop a direct link with the Silk Road. Byzantium was dependent on Persia, and so the regular conflict between the empires inevitably disrupted the silk trade. To offset these supply problems, Justinian wanted to find an alternate route to access this product and to develop a domestic silk industry. The historian Procopius reported that the latter became possible when monks smuggled the eggs of silk worms into the empire, and with that, sericulture was born in the Mediterranean world and a valuable Byzantine industry emerged.

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structure in Istanbul today. The impact of this architectural wonder was celebrated by Procopius:

> Whenever anyone enters this church to pray, he understands at once that it is not by any human power or skill, but by the influence of God, that this work has been so finely tuned. And so, his mind is lifted up toward God and exalted, feeling that God cannot be far away, but must especially love to dwell in this place which HE has chosen. (Procopius, On Buildings I, 1.61)

In addition to Hagia Sophia, Justinian built or rebuilt many other churches in Constantinople and throughout the empire, as well as fortifications and civil projects, such as bridges and cisterns.

Also, in the aftermath of the riots, Justinian began his reconquest of the West. Justinian claimed that his actions were fired by a concern for Orthodox Christianity (the Vandals were Arian Christians) and for the liberation of Roman subjects who lived under non-Roman rulers. The deposition of the pro-Byzantine Vandal King Hilderic was the pretext for Justinian's invasion of North Africa. Hilderic had appealed for aid but was murdered by his successor. Justinian ordered Belisarius to restore imperial order. The move was not without risk, since previous imperial expeditions to recover North Africa had ended with costly failures under Theodosius II in 442 CE and Leo I in 468 CE and again in 470 CE. Remarkably, by 534 CE, Belisarius had liberated the capital of Carthage, defeated the Vandal army, captured their king, and seized their treasury. He returned to Constantinople with monarch and treasury, and both triumphant general and defeated king prostrated before the emperor. The victory in North Africa was swift, but managing the territory would prove an ongoing challenge because of recurring Berber revolts and Byzantine troops disgruntled over lack of payment.

Justinian next sent Belisarius against Ostrogothic Italy, where Justinian claimed to be avenging the murder of an Ostrogothic princess, Amalasuntha. The general seized Sicily in 535 CE and then marched up the Italian peninsula, seizing Rome by December 536 CE. In a prudent diplomatic move, the Ostrogoths called on the Persians to attack the empire, but Belisarius managed by trickery to gain control of Ravenna, the Ostrogothic capital in 540 CE, along with its king and treasury. Concerned about the loyalty of his general, Justinian recalled Belisarius, just as a charismatic leader named Totila (or Baduila) rallied the Ostrogoths. Totila was the most effective Ostrogothic leader since Theoderic and would prolong the war for more than a decade.

Taking advantage of Justinian's focus on Italy, Persian Shah Khusro I (r. 531–579 CE) invaded in 540 CE, breaking the "Endless Peace" treaty that he had signed in 532 CE, and seized Antioch. Justinian ordered Belisarius to this third theater of war. Before the general could make headway, however, Justinian recalled him, under a cloud of suspicion.

While conflict raged on two fronts, Constantinople was confronted by an even more deadly menace in 542 CE: the plague, which would make recurring appearances

for two centuries. This was devastating, with a reported loss of life of more than 200,000. Justinian himself contracted the disease but survived. This plague had an enormous demographic impact, which subsequently reduced tax revenue and greatly hampered military recruitment. This, in part, explains much of the empire's struggle for the next decade.

The war in Italy took a turn for the worse, as Totila advanced. Justinian again sent Belisarius to Italy in 544 CE, but he could make little headway, given the chronic shortage of troops, and was recalled and retired in 549 CE. By 551 CE, peace in Africa and calm on the eastern frontier gave Justinian the opportunity to focus on Italy. He gathered a large army of some 30,000, which he entrusted to the eunuch general Narses, who finally brought the Ostrogothic War to its conclusion. Byzantine armies scored a major victory at the Battle of Taginae (also called Busta Gallorum) in summer 552 CE, and Totila was killed. Narses wrapped up the remaining opposition and then beat back a Frankish invasion of northern Italy, and with that, the war in Italy came to an end in 554 CE. Italy was in imperial hands, but after two decades of conflict, the peninsula was devastated. To govern Italy and Africa, Justinian created a new position known as the exarch, with one governing from Italy from Ravenna and another overseeing North Africa from Carthage. The exarch combined civil and military power into a single position, ending the separation of civil and military power that had begun with the reforms of Diocletian. This was a sign of changes to come in the seventh century.

In the East, the Persians were halted by a five-year truce in 545 CE, for which the empire agreed to provide an enormous tribute, and after much conflict, a 50-year truce was agreed in 561 CE, with the empire continuing to pay an annual tribute, though smaller than that set in 545 CE. During the conflict in Italy, Justinian also took advantage of an internal conflict among the Visigoths who ruled Spain to seize control of the southern portion of the Iberian Peninsula. This focus on the West and East was at the expense of attention to the Balkans, where Bulgars continued to make inroads through this neglected frontier and the Slavs also appeared for the first time. Both would transform the Balkans over the next century.

Justinian approached the religious realm with zealous dedication and a commitment to achieve Christian unity. The first step had been to end the Acacian Schism, which united Rome and Constantinople, but the more difficult challenge was to ensure the loyalty of Alexandria and Antioch, where Monophysite theology dominated. Justinian tried persecution, but this failed. As a supporter of Monophysite Christianity, Theodora protected Monophysite leaders, even as Justinian was persecuting them. It was alleged by Procopius in his *Secret History* that this was an imperial strategy to show support of contradictory theologies from the same imperial palace. In 533 CE, Justinian shifted to negotiation, welcoming Monophysite leaders for discussion and trying to forge a compromise by rejecting extreme Monophysite theology, while agreeing on what they could mutually condemn. He focused on a denunciation of three authors deemed "pro-Nestorian": Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Ibas of Edessa, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Justinian received an agreement from the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and, through compulsion, Rome. This

was confirmed by the Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople 553 CE but did not resolve the fundamental problem. It was impossible to find a theological solution that would be acceptable both to Rome and to the Monophysite leaders of the East. While Justinian struggled, Theodora became a patron of the development of a Monophysite ecclesiastical organization, separate from the Orthodox one. She arranged for the appointment of Monophysite John of Amida (also known as John of Ephesus) to serve as a missionary to pagans in the empire and was said to have converted some 70,000. She also ensured the consecration of Bishop Jacob Bar'adai (ca. 500–578 CE), whom she had been protecting in Constantinople. He became the organizer of the Monophysite Church in Syria. Because of his work, the Monophysite Christian Church in Syria is sometimes referred to as the "Jacobite" Church.

Justinian died on November 14, 565 CE. He had no children and named no heir. He was succeeded by Justin II (r. 565–578 CE), who was married to Empress Theodora's niece Sophia.

Justinian's reign was remarkable, revolutionary, and long, and it is challenging to provide an adequate summary of his reign. Assessing this reign is a complicated affair, and this is well reflected in three texts penned by a single author. Procopius, an eyewitness to events of the day, wrote a work of praise, *On the Buildings*; a detailed account of Justinian's wars, the *History of the Wars*; and an openly hostile and scandalous account of the era, *The Secret History.*

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of; *Individuals*: Belisarius; Narses; Procopius; Theodora; *Groups and Organizations*: Monophysites; *Key Events*: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*; Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); *Primary Documents*: Document 14; Document 15

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Lecapenus, Romanus I (r. 920–944 CE)

Romanus I Lecapenus was a Byzantine Emperor from 920 to 944 CE, serving as senior emperor during the long reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 913–959 CE), who was the fourth emperor of the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056 CE). Romanus was from a family of Armenian peasants from eastern Anatolia. His father served in the Byzantine army and then in a guard unit of the imperial palace under Emperor Basil I (r. 867–886 CE), while Romanus embarked on a naval career. He became an admiral in 911 CE, and from that position, he seized the throne in 920 CE as a partner to Constantine.

Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE), the second Macedonian emperor, struggled to produce an heir. Leo repudiated his first wife, who was forced on him by his father, in preference of his mistress, Zoe, whom he later married. The emperor promoted her father, Stylianos, to the highest rank and position in the imperial administration and, in 894 CE, consented to his proposal that all trade with Bulgaria pass through Thessalonica, rather than through Constantinople. This proposal benefited Stylianos and his comrades but worked against the interests of Bulgaria. The protests of Khan Symeon of Bulgaria (r. 893–927 CE) were dismissed, and so, he took up arms. Symeon's victory and the Treaty of 896 CE brought an end to the policy and earned the khan an annual tribute from Constantinople.

This victory was the first of many that Symeon won against the empire throughout this long reign. Symeon was the son of Khan Boris, who converted Bulgaria to Christianity in 864 CE. Boris sent Symeon to Constantinople for his education and expected him to assume the ecclesiastical leadership of Bulgaria. This plan was dashed by the political failure of Boris's older son, who was deposed, and replaced with Symeon in 893 CE. Symeon would be a preeminent threat through much of the reign of Romanus I.

Leo's marriage to Zoe in 898 CE came to an end with her death in 899 CE. Still without an heir, Leo married a third time, requiring a special dispensation from the patriarch, since the church forbade a third marriage. Unfortunately, Leo's third wife died during childbirth in 901 CE, leaving him again without an heir, and Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos declared that a fourth marriage was impossible. Leo did not press the matter, until his mistress, Zoe Karbonopsina, gave birth to a son, Constantine, in the purple birthing room of the imperial palace. Leo needed the boy to be recognized as legitimate, so that he could be his heir. This necessity to marry a fourth time, in violation of canon law, produced the Tetragamy ("four marriages") Controversy. Refusing to yield, Patriarch Nicholas conspired with a leading general against Leo, but their efforts failed. Caught in treasonous activity, the repentant patriarch consented to baptize the child in 906 CE and to allow the fourth marriage. Leo also obtained approval for the marriage from the bishop of Rome and from the patriarchs of the East. Having achieved this, Leo dismissed Nicholas in 907 CE and appointed a monk named Euthymius.

Leo died in 912 CE, when his son, Constantine, was only six years old. Because of the boy's age, Emperor Alexander, Leo's brother, reigned. Alexander deposed

Euthymius and reappointed Nicholas. He also refused to continue the tribute paid to Symeon under the terms of the treaty of 896 CE, but the consequences of this decision were to be handled by his successors, since Alexander died in 913 CE. His death was followed by another struggle for power between factions polarized around Patriarch Nicholas and his rival Zoe, mother of young Emperor Constantine, while Symeon launched his second invasion. To pacify the khan, Patriarch Nicholas agreed to the future marriage of Symeon's daughter to Emperor Constantine and consented to crown Symeon and give him the title of emperor (*basileus*), but this was not meant to mean "emperor of the Romans/Byzantines."

These concessions raised ire against Nicholas. Zoe was able to reassert her authority in the regency. She rejected the marriage agreement that Nicholas had made and rejected the imperial title that was conferred. Symeon rampaged, while the Byzantine defense was hampered by squabbles between military leaders and palace intrigue, and he demanded that the proposed marriage take place. By 919, after a failed attempt to attack Symeon, the Byzantine defense collapsed and a scramble for ascendancy began, particularly by the Phocas family. In the turmoil, the emperor's tutor called Admiral Romanus to the palace to protect the emperor from imminent threat. Romanus adroitly outmaneuvered his rivals in a complex power game, and the emperor assigned him as commander of the imperial bodyguard. In this influential position, Romanus then arranged, in May 919 CE, for the marriage of the emperor to his own daughter, Helena, and had his son, Christopher, succeed him as head of the bodyguard.

Romanus warded off a military rebellion and plot in favor of the Phocas family. To improve his hold on the throne, Romanus tonsured Zoe, the emperor's mother, and exiled her from the palace, along with the emperor's tutor, who was too close to the recent conspiracies. Constantine appointed Romanus Caesar and he was crowned coemperor by the patriarch and emperor on December 17, 920 CE, assuming priority over his 15-year-old imperial partner. Romanus crowned his wife as Augustus (empress) and his eldest child, Christopher, as coemperor in May 921 CE.

From the start of his reign, Romanus faced the hostility of Symeon. Byzantine arms continued to struggle against the khan, so the emperor turned to diplomacy and Symeon had to shift his attention away from Byzantium and to the Serbs, which provided a brief reprieve. Symeon was soon back and continued to rampage but realized that he could not conquer Constantinople without a fleet. And so, he opened negotiations with the Fatimid Caliphate in North Africa for naval support. The Byzantines managed to intercept the Bulgarian ambassadors and made a counteroffer to neutralize this possibility. Finally, in 924 CE, Symeon mustered the full might of his kingdom and invaded, and once again was stopped by the city's walls. He conferred with the patriarch and emperor, who called on his Christian fellow ruler to stop killing Christians and agreed to peace for an annual tribute. In 926 CE, Symeon extended his conquests in the western Balkans and assumed the title emperor of the Romans and Bulgarians, also declaring that the archbishop of Bulgaria was an independent patriarchate. Symeon died in 927 CE, and in the aftermath, peace settled on the Balkans. His son and successor, Peter, agreed to a 20-year truce, married Romanus's granddaughter Maria, and accepted tribute from the empire.

There was an environmental motivation for the restoration of peace in the Balkans: a devastating famine was followed by a brutal winter in 927–28 CE. Romanus gave assistance to the needy and learned that desperation had forced many small landholders to sell their property to powerful elites, whom they then served as tenants. In addition to the obvious inequity of the situation, this also undermined the foundation of Byzantium's military lands, which provided for soldiers in the thematic armies. In 928 CE, the emperor issued the first of his two laws to protect "the poor" (*ptochoi*) against "the powerful" (*dynatoi*). He required that land for sale had to be offered to relatives and those in the community. The emperor issued a second law in 934 CE mandating that lands sold in contradiction of the law had to be returned to the sellers without compensation and that lands sold legally could be purchased back at the same price for which they was sold. Romanus was the first emperor to issue such land legislation that aimed at controlling the rising power of aristocratic families that would increasingly directly challenge imperial power over the next century.

In ecclesiastical affairs, Romanus resolved the prolonged tensions over Emperor Leo VI's fourth marriage (the Tetragamy Controversy) through a church council and his Tome of Union, which brought reconciliation between the factions of Patriarchs Euthymius and Nicholas. When Nicholas died in 925 CE, he selected patriarchs who would not aspire to political activity, culminating in the appointment of his then 16-year old son, Theophylact, who served as bishop of Constantinople from 933 to 956 CE.

In the East, the empire made importance advances, largely thanks to a remarkable general named John Kourkouas, who was a new appointment and not a member of a prominent aristocratic family, like the Phocas clan, who vied for power during the Macedonian Dynasty. Romanus appointed him as supreme commander (*domestikos ton scholon*) in 922 CE and he remained in this post for two decades. Through his general, Romanus strengthened Byzantine power, extending the empire's authority in eastern Anatolia, the Caucasus, and upper Mesopotamia. He even obtained the *Mandylion*, a celebrated cloth relic with Christ's face, from the city of Edessa, which passed to Constantinople. In 941 CE, John crushed a Russian assault on the empire. He was preparing for a major expedition against the Arabs, when the Russian prince Igor attacked Constantinople. The Russian fleet was deterred by Greek fire and crossed the Bosporus to Anatolia, where John delivered a crushing blow. What was left of the invading force was wiped out by the Byzantine navy.

In the West, Romanus asserted the Byzantine hold on southern Italy. This control was challenged, however, by Lombard duchies to the north and by attacks from Islamic forces in the south, coming from Sicily and North Africa. To bolster the empire's position, Emperor Romanus allied with Hugh of Arles, king of Italy (r. 926–947 CE) and secured the tie by arranging for the marriage of Hugh's daughter and the son of Emperor Constantine VII, Romanus (the future emperor).

Romanus managed the empire with care and left it more secure than he had found it. Late in his reign, he decided that Emperor Constantine should reign over his own sons Stephen and Constantine, his eldest son, Christopher, having died in 931 CE. The brothers resented this arrangement and pressured their father to replace John Kourkouas with a relative to strengthen their position against Constantine (though the

appointment proved to be an utter failure). In December 944 CE, the sons conspired with palace officials to arrest their father and shipped him off to an island in the Sea of Marmara. This move triggered a popular reaction in defense of Emperor Constantine, with crowds surrounding the palace and calling for the Macedonian emperor. Helena, wife of Constantine and sister to the conspirators, encouraged her husband to seize the reigns of state, which he did. In January 945 CE, the brothers were exiled to the same monastery to which they had sent their father (and later exiled further still). Constantine overhauled the palace staff, removing anyone connected with the pair and ruled until his death in 959 CE, and always remained deeply resentful of the memory of his father-in-law.

Romanus died on June 15, 948 CE. He was buried in Constantinople, next to his wife, at the monastery of the Myrelaeum, which he had built while he was emperor.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; *Dynatoi*; *Military*: Themes; *Objects and Artifacts*: Mandylion of Edessa

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Leo III, the Isaurian (r. 717–741 CE)

Leo III was a Byzantine emperor from 717 to 741 CE and the founder of the Syrian, also referred to as Isaurian, Dynasty (717–802 CE). He was originally from Germanicia, located in the borderland between Byzantium and the Caliphate (in today's Turkey, near the Syrian border). Leo's reign was a successful one, and he restored order to an empire in great peril. Leo was the proponent of a religious doctrine known as Iconoclasm, which was imperial policy from 726 until 787 CE and then again from 814 to 842 CE.

Leo's reign emerged out of a period of political turmoil. The dynasty of Heraclius (610–641 CE) ostensibly came to an end in 695, when unpopular Emperor Justinian II was overthrown by one of his generals, who assumed the throne as Emperor Leontius (r. 695–698). The Heraclian Dynasty had endured the catastrophe of the seventh century, which witnessed the rise of an Islamic empire that absorbed most of the empire's territory (the Levant, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain) and with that, most of its revenue, while the Balkans were lost to Slavs and Bulgars. To maintain a grip on what was left, the Heraclian Dynasty overhauled the administrative and military apparatus of the state, dividing the empire into large provinces called themes (*themata*), each under a *commander* (*strategos*) who wielded civil and military power and led the soldiers

settled in the province. The deposition of Justinian II (r. 685–695; 705–711 CE) was the first of seven violent changes in power between 695 and 717 CE, including Justinian II's retaking the throne in 705, followed by the definitive end of the Heraclian Dynasty with his execution in 711 CE. These two decades were disastrous for the empire, which endured chronic civil strife, further territorial loss, and annual raids by the Arabs.

This period culminated with two events. The first was a massive Arab invasion that had as its goal the complete conquest of the Byzantine Empire by bringing its capital, Constantinople, into the abode of Islam. The second was yet another turnover of power. Leo, *strategos* of the Anatolikon Theme, in a formidable alliance with the *strategos* of the Armenikon theme, ousted the Byzantine sovereign and became Emperor Leo III in 717 CE. This was the seventh change in imperial power in the past two decades, but it would prove the last change for more than two decades. Leo ended the disorder and established a dynasty that would live through the century.

Leo inherited an Arab problem that was immediately on his doorstep. The Umayyad caliph had sent a massive force, reportedly 120,000 soldiers and 1,800 ships, to conquer Constantinople. Leo energetically led the defense, effectively utilizing the Byzantine technology of Greek fire against the Arab navy and allying with the Bulgar khan to batter Arab troops from the west. A pitilessly cold winter aided the Byzantine side as the Arabs struggled against foe and famine. The Arab cause appeared to be reinvigorated in spring 718 CE, with the approach of reinforcements by land and sea, but their hopes were soon dashed. The newly arrived fleet, manned largely by Christian Egyptians, deserted to the Byzantine side, and the emperor arranged an ambush of the reinforcements coming by land, before they reached Constantinople. The Arabs admitted defeat. After a 13-month siege, the Arab force evacuated on August 15, which was the feast day of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, the patron saint and protector of Constantinople. Adding a further blow, the retreating Arab navy was destroyed by storms, Byzantine attacks, and volcanic activity in the Aegean. Leo III was the savior of the empire and had achieved a striking victory that had eluded previous emperors.

Leo's victory provided a military foundation for political stability, and he would have additional battlefield successes against Arab invasions of Anatolia at Nicaea in 726 CE and Akroinon in 740 CE. The empire was on the defensive, but its leadership and organizational strength held firm and prevented further loss. The stability was manifest in 720 CE, when Leo crowned his son, Constantine, as emperor and thwarted a plot against him, which he ruthlessly punished.

Other measures to further stabilize and strengthen the empire included the creation of a new silver coin, fixed at a ratio of 12 to the gold *nomisma*. This was a convenient denomination between the *nomisma* and the copper *follis*. The emperor also issued a new law code, *the Ecloga* (meaning "selection"), the first since the age of Justinian. This code was a departure from the scope and scale of the Justinianic Code but served as Leo's response to the general ignorance of lawyers of his day and provided an accessible and clear guide. The code was influenced by Christian morality concerning issues of sexuality, marriage, and divorce and assigned mutilation as punishment for various crimes, which was preferable over execution in that it afforded the guilty time to repent, while broadcasting imperial power over malefactors.

For the security of the empire, Leo allied with the Turkic Khazars, who dominated north of the Caucasus, and shared his enmity toward the Arab empire. Leo married his son to the daughter of the Khazar khan. In the West, the Germanic Lombards remained a persistent challenge. Leo maintained control over Ravenna, the Byzantine capital of Italy, but exercised little control beyond, apart from Byzantine possession in Sicily and southern Italy. Leo's hold in Italy would become even weaker because of his strained relationship with the papacy of Gregory II (r. 715–731 CE) and Gregory III (r. 731–741 CE), once the emperor embraced the religious policy Iconoclasm ("icon breaking"), which the papacy vehemently rejected.

Iconoclasm did not begin with Leo III. There had long existed minority voices in the Christian tradition that rejected images, expressing concern for the biblical injunction against "graven images." In the eighth century, this opinion was championed by two bishops, Constantine of Nacolea and Thomas of Claudiopolis, as well as by Emperor Leo. They believed that an explanation for the empire's struggles over the past decades was that it was punishment from God for the sin of icons (religious images), which had increased in popularity in the sixth and seventh centuries. Sources hostile to Leo and to Iconoclasm disregarded the fact that there was such a view within the Christian tradition and, instead, attributed this theological position to Muslim and Jewish influence, but this was merely invective.

After there was yet another volcanic eruption at Thera in the Aegean Sea, Leo interpreted this as a message from the divine to act. In 726 CE, he ordered the removal of the large Icon of Christ that hung above the Chalke ("Bronze") Gate, which was the public, visible entrance to the imperial palace. Protesters gathered and were thrashed by imperial guards. This act of removal was followed by an imperial law condemning images. In 730 CE, Leo held a council of state (*silention*) that supported the condemnation. The patriarch refused to attend and resigned. Leo replaced him with a pro-Iconoclasm candidate. All images were banned and were to be destroyed or covered up. This was justified because such images contradicted the Bible. It is important to note that this was not a ban on all images, as existed in the Muslim world. Here, secular images and portraits of the emperor were not affected; this was a ban only on *religious* images. And so, the only acceptable holy images were church buildings, the cross, and the Eucharist.

As stated, Bishop Gregory of Rome condemned Iconoclasm and disapproved of the emperor's claim to issue decrees on religious matters. With a hostile pope in Rome, there was revolt against the emperor in Ravenna, while a naval revolt broke out in the Aegean, which the emperor suppressed. Leo was less effective at exerting imperial authority in Italy. In 733 CE, he sent a fleet to arrest the pope, but it was destroyed by a storm. Frustrated by the pope's defiance, the emperor confiscated papal property in Calabria and Sicily and transferred jurisdiction over imperial territory in Italy and the Balkans from the papacy to the bishop of Constantinople. This transfer was to become a subject of a long controversy between the episcopal jurisdictions.

Monk and theologian John of Damascus (ca. 675–ca. 753 CE) was another defender of images. Like the pope, John was beyond the reach of the emperor, but he was in even more secure territory: that of the Umayyad Caliphate. In his writings, John

provided a theological justification for icon veneration, which infuriated the Syrian Dynasty.

In 740 CE, an earthquake struck Constantinople and surrounding territories, which caused substantial damage to the capital. Icon supporters attributed this to the wrath of God for Leo's Iconoclasm, but the emperor was unfazed. He added a surcharge to land taxes and used this to restore the walls of the city.

Leo died in June 741 CE. Unlike his immediate predecessors, he died of natural causes and while still reigning, passing power to his adult son, Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE).

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Individuals*: Gregory the Great; Irene; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Iconoclasts; Iconodules; Khazars; *Military*: Greek Fire; *Strategos*; Themes

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Liudprand of Cremona (920–972 CE)

Liudprand of Cremona was an Italian bishop who served as ambassador to Constantinople on multiple occasions in the 10th century, working for the court of the king of Italy, Hugh of Arles (r. 924–947 CE), and, after 950 CE, for the king of East Francia and then (Western) emperor, Otto I (r. 962–973 CE).

Byzantine activity in Italy had increased during the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056 CE), after a prolonged period of neglect. Basil I (r. 867–886 CE), founder of the dynasty, instituted an active presence there, led by his general Nicephorus Phocas (grandfather of the Byzantine emperor of the same name), who restored Byzantine control over southern Italy. This control was challenged, however, by Lombard duchies to the north and by attacks from Islamic forces in the south, coming from Sicily and North Africa. In the 10th century, Byzantine influence crept northward and the empire sought recognition as suzerain over Lombard principalities and coastal cities. To bolster the empire's position, Emperor Romanus Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE) allied with Hugh of Arles, king of Italy, and secured the tie by arranging for the marriage of Hugh's daughter and Romanus (the future emperor), son of Emperor Constantine VII (r. 913–959 CE). The bride's name was changed from Bertha to Eudocia, which was much more pleasant sounding to Byzantine ears.

Liudprand had a close relationship with Hugh, who had taken care of him after his father died, when Liudprand was only seven years old. The king provided for him and ensured his education, and he received ordination as a deacon in the church. In 949–950 CE, Liudprand served as Hugh's ambassador in Constantinople, during the reign of Emperor Constantine VII. It was during this stay in the Byzantine capital that Liudprand learned the Greek language. Hugh died in 950 CE, and the throne passed to his child, Lothar, while Berengar of Ivrea acted as the boy's caretaker. Emperor Constantine VII shifted the empire's alliance to Berengar, who became king, when Lothar died. With Berengar on the throne, Liudprand lost royal support and his fortune took a turn for the worse. He abandoned Italy, heading north across the Alps, to the German kingdom of East Francia and the court of King Otto I.

It was after his departure from Italy that the embittered Liudprand wrote the *Antapodosis* or *Retribution*. The text addresses contemporary European and Mediterranean history, and through this, he aimed for vengeance against all those who had ruined his good fortune. By writing history that exposed misdeeds of every kind, Liudprand hoped to have his revenge. *Antapodosis* would also reveal how the divine plan was evident in recent history, even if, at times, that plan was very difficult to comprehend, though God's judgment, in the end, would fall upon the wicked and raise the righteous up. Liudprand wrote with a solid command of Latin and he also spun a good tale, punctuating the narrative with humor and licentious incidents, which added to the work's popularity. Though written in Latin, the book frequently shifts into Greek, so that Liudprand could highlight his command of the language, knowledge of which was relatively rare in the West at that time. In the *Antapodosis*, Liudprand expressed a very positive view of Byzantine culture and court and held the emperor in great respect. His observations on the Byzantine court included being awestruck by aspects of Byzantine technology, ceremony, and wealth. The work also provided historical background on the Byzantine Empire, from the rise of Emperor Basil I to contemporary history.

In 961 CE, Otto selected Liudprand to be the bishop of Cremona. By this time, the bishop altered his view of the Byzantine Empire significantly, adopting the Ottonian perspective. Otto I revived the imperial claims over Italy, which led to a direct clash with Byzantium. Emulating Charlemagne, Otto crossed the Alps and acted as the benefactor and defender of the papacy. He defeated Berengar and received his reward when Pope John XII (r. 955–964 CE) crowned him emperor on February 2, 962 CE. Liudprand wrote a defense of Otto's actions in Italy in his text *Concerning King Otto*. The coronation reignited East-West tension over claims on the imperial title and the meaning of "Roman," while also strengthening the bond between (western) emperor and pope. Furthermore, Otto allied with Lombard princes to press his authority over Byzantine territory in southern Italy, which he attacked in 968 CE, though without success.

In 968, Otto sent Liudprand as ambassador to Constantinople to obtain an imperial princess for Otto's son, Otto II (r. 973–983 CE). The bishop arrived at the court of Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963–969 CE) and had a vastly different reception than that of his 949–950 CE trip, when in King Hugh's service. Liudprand recounted

this experience in his *Narrative of an Embassy to Constantinople*, which he wrote soon afterward. The *Narrative* presented an extremely hostile angle on almost every aspect of Byzantine court and culture and depicted the emperor with disdain. The text highlighted the clash over titles (that of king vs. emperor), but also revealed the remarkable control that the Byzantine state maintained over foreign ambassadors and even the effectiveness of its customs agents, who confiscated as contraband silk that Liudprand had purchased in Constantinople, much to the bishop's outrage.

It seems that Liudprand participated on one final embassy to Constantinople in 970 CE and found a more welcome reception from Emperor John I Tzimisces (r. 969–976 CE), who agreed to send a Byzantine bride for Otto II. Their son, the future Otto III, was born in 980 CE, but Liudprand did not live to see the fruits of his labor. While it is not certain, it is likely that Liudprand died on his return from this service abroad.

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See also: *Individuals*: Lecapenus, Romanus I; Phocas

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Maurice (r. 582–602 CE)

Maurice was a Byzantine emperor from 582–602 CE. He was a native of Cappadocia in Anatolia. He was educated and began his imperial service as a *notarius* (secretary) for the imperial guard unit known as the *Excubitors* and advanced to become the unit's commander. His military career was distinguished and hard-fought, and he wrote a treatise on military tactics called the *Strategicon*. His demands on the army led to a mutiny and he was overthrown in 602 CE, making Maurice the first emperor reigning from Constantinople to be removed from power.

The emperor Justinian died on November 14, 565 CE. He and Theodora had no children and the throne passed to Justin, who was the son of Justinian's sister, and married to Sophia, the niece of Theodora. Justin II (r. 565–578 CE) rashly overturned many of his uncle's domestic and foreign policy decisions. He ended the subsidies that Justinian paid to keep the nomadic Avars in check on the Danube frontier. The Avars vented their wrath by allying with the Germanic Lombards against their rivals, the Germanic Gepids, and shattered the might of this tribe. This strengthened the hand of the Avars and weakened the empire's by removing a potential barrier to an Avar advance. Emperor Justin was forced to send his Count of the *Excubitors*, Tiberius, to defend the Balkans. The removal of the Gepids also threatened the Lombards themselves. Realizing that their position was now endangered by the more powerful Avars, the Lombards moved west and invaded Italy in 568 CE. They soon dominated much of the peninsula, which was hardly defended by Constantinople.

As with the Avars, Justin refused by pay the tribute due to Sassanid Persia under the terms of the treaty of 561 CE. In addition, he tried to replace Persian influence with Byzantine control over Armenia. This provoked a Persian war. Justin appointed his cousin Maurice master of soldiers and commander for this theater of operation. Maurice advanced into Persian Mesopotamia in 573 CE and began to besiege the Persian frontier city of Nisibis, when he learned that Justin II had fired him. At this point, the frontier defense collapsed and the city of Dara, which was the most important Byzantine defensive position on the Persian frontier, fell to Sassanid Persian Shah Khusro I. The shock of this defeat was too much for Justin, who experienced a psychological breakdown. Empress Sophia assumed control of the empire and convinced the emperor to promote Tiberius to the rank of Caesar. Peace with the Persians was arranged, excluding hostilities in Armenia, and the empire agreed to pay a higher tribute than before.

When Justin II died in 578 CE, Tiberius became emperor (r. 574–582 CE), ruling with Empress Sophia. Tiberius pursued the defense of the empire and his own popularity by spending lavishly, draining the accumulated financial reserves. He cut taxes, furnished gifts to the soldiers, and granted lavish handouts to the Avars and Lombards. To manage the Byzantine-Persian hostilities in Armenia, Tiberius promoted Maurice, the Count of the *Excubitors*, to take command of the war in the East. In 578 CE, Maurice responded to Persian raids by successfully invading Persian territory. The trouble for the commander was not strategy, but money, and his army's pay was falling into arrears. Despite these challenges, Maurice again raided into Persian territory, nearly reaching the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, in 580 CE. The campaign was thwarted by the Ghassanid Arab commander, an ostensible Byzantine ally, who steered the Persians to threaten Maurice's rear. Maurice withdrew and arrested the Ghassanid leader, which, like the removal of the Gepids in the Balkans, made the Byzantine-Persian frontier less stable, and the war continued. In 582 CE, Maurice inflicted a major defeat on the Persian army but was not able to build on this, because of the imminent death of Tiberius.

With the Byzantine forces completely focused on Persia, the Avars turned from ally to enemy and asserted control over the northern Balkans, while Slavs began migrating into the eastern Balkans. Tiberius granted tribute to the Avars, but their hold on territory south of the Danube was tolerated because the army was still occupied in the East; and the Slavs gained ground.

Just before his death, Tiberius crowned son-in-law Maurice as emperor (r. 582–602 CE). He was 43 years old and inherited an empire that was endangered on three frontiers (Italy, the Balkans, and the East) and short of cash. Of the three, Maurice deemed the Persian threat as most dangerous and continued his attention there. In the West, he bought the support of Childebert II (r. 575–595 CE), king of the Franks, against the Lombards. The Avars continued to storm the Balkans and were held off by further subsidies, while the Slavs continued their advance but were checked by the Long Wall built by Emperor Anastasius. Neither Avar nor Slav, however, was kept away for long. Maurice was forced to transfer some troops from the East to begin engagements on the Balkan frontier. This show of force temporarily ameliorated the situation.

A continual challenge for Maurice was the empire's finances, which were stretched thin. The emperor looked for ways to reduce costs. He reduced the cash allowance that was given to soldiers to cover the cost of arms and provisions and provided this in kind, which had been the normal imperial procedure before the sixth century. This amounted to a pay cut, and the army mutinied. It was eventually pacified in 589 CE by restoration of pay and a change in command. The pressure in the East subsided when a Persian civil war broke out. In a surprising turn, the legitimate shah, Khusro II, facing defeat at home, fled to the Byzantine Empire and agreed to relinquish control of Armenia and strategic points on the frontier, if the emperor would help, which he did. Maurice restored Khusro II to power by force of Byzantine arms, and peace reigned on the Persian frontier by 591 CE.

Having finally achieved peace in the East, Maurice mow focused on the Danube frontier. His plan was to fight on the enemy's terrain, north of the Danube. He ordered the Byzantine army to spend the winter there in 593–594 CE by living off the land, another cost-saving measure. This created a furor among the troops. It was made worse when, in 594 CE, he declared that cash allowances would be eliminated and, in their place all arms and arms would be provided in kind. Their frustration was somewhat offset by another imperial decision that allowed the sons of fallen soldiers to take their fathers' place in the army. Service in the sixth century was an attractive option for many peasants and was on a voluntary basis and not by forced conscription, as it had been in the third and fourth centuries.

In 597 CE, the Avars invaded the Balkans and Maurice himself rose to marshal the army in defense. He agreed to increase the tribute paid to the Avars, as plague ravaged both the Avars and empire. In the summer of 599 CE, Maurice began a major campaign against Avar power, which was victorious and seemed to secure the frontier, but the unfortunate combination of plague and financial problems took their toll on the empire and severe food shortages occurred in the capital, which provoked fierce rioting.

In the summer of 602 CE, Maurice ordered his army to march north of the Balkans, under the leadership of his brother, Peter, to fight the Slavs. Once again, the emperor expected the soldiers to winter on enemy ground as a cost-saving measure. Facing a cold winter in hostile territory and without certain provisions, the army mutinied. Peter fled, and the army elected as their commander a junior officer named Phocas, who marched to Constantinople and directed the army's rage at the reigning emperor. Maurice fled and sent one of his children, Theodosius, to Persia to request the help of Shah Khusro II, whom Maurice had helped a decade earlier.

Phocas entered the city on November 25, 602 CE, as emperor. This was the first time that an emperor in Constantinople had been dethroned since the city's foundation in 330 CE. Maurice and his five sons were arrested, executed, and put on display. It was reported that his sixth son, Theodosius, had been caught at Nicaea and executed there, but his body was not sent to Constantinople, and rumors that he had escaped would haunt the empire.

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See also: *Government and Politics: Notarius; Organization and Administration*: Taxes; *Individuals*: Anastasius, Flavius; Justinian; Phocas; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Franks; Persians; Slavs; *Military*: Excubitors; *Strategicon*

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Methodius (826–869 CE) and Cyril (815–885 CE), Apostles to the Slavs

In the 9th and 10th centuries, many Slavic peoples in the orbit of the Byzantine Empire, including the Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians, were converted to Orthodox Christianity, thanks to the efforts of the Byzantine state and its missionaries. Of these missionaries, the most celebrated today are the "Apostles to the Slavs," the brothers Cyril and Methodius, who spread Orthodox Christianity to the Moravians in central Europe and invented a script for the Slavic language.

Methodius and Constantine (the future Cyril) were from a prominent family in Thessalonica, where their father was a military officer. They grew up in a bilingual environment and were fluent in both Greek and Slavic. Methodius, the older brother, was an official in the Byzantine civil administration, while his younger brother, Constantine, had a remarkable zest for learning and was sent to Constantinople to pursue higher education. There, he benefited from the guidance of Photius, the leading figure in the intellectual life of ninth-century Byzantium and patriarch of Constantinople from 858–867 CE and again from 877–886 CE. Constantine served on a diplomatic mission to the Abbasid Caliphate, where he participated in discussions with Muslim theologians, explaining the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In 860–861 CE, his brother, Methodius, joined him on a mission to the Khazars, where they sought to convert the khan from Judaism to Christianity. The mission failed, but on their return, Constantine discovered relics in the Crimea that he believed to be those of Saint Clement of Rome.

In 862 CE, Rastislav, king of Great Moravia in central Europe (covering what is today the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and portions of Austria and Hungary), wrote to

Emperor Michael III (842–867 CE) asking for a teacher who could instruct the Moravians in their own language. The Kingdom of Moravia lay between the East Frankish Kingdom of Louis the German (843–876 CE) and the pagan Bulgars. As a Frankish and Bulgarian alliance emerged, Rastislav was squeezed between two threatening powers, while German Christian missionaries appeared in his kingdom from the Eastern Franks. And so, he turned to Constantinople. Emperor Michael III chose Constantine and Methodius because of their command of Slavic, and Constantine set out to invent the first Slavic alphabet, called Glagolitic, a precursor of today's Cyrillic script. The brothers then began to translate the Bible and liturgical texts for use among the Slavs.

The brothers' work began in Moravia, but they were challenged by the Frankish Christian leaders, who resented their presence. The brothers traveled to Rome to defend themselves to Pope Nicholas I (858–867 CE) against accusations made by their rivals and to seek ordination for new leaders of the church in Moravia. On their way south, they defended their work in Venice against Western Christians who spurned this use of a new script and a new language for the Christian missionary enterprise. It was their view that only Latin, Greek, and Hebrew were acceptable languages for the worship of God. Constantine rejected this trilingual chauvinism and defended the

Known as the "Apostles to the Slavs," brothers Cyril and Methodius were the most celebrated Byzantine missionaries, spreading Orthodox Christianity among the Slavs of Central Europe and inventing a script for the Slavic language into which they translated the Bible and Greek liturgical texts. Their missionary efforts later bore much fruit among the Russians, Bulgarians, and Serbs, who adopted Byzantium's Orthodox Christian theological perspective. (ullstein bild via Getty Images)

KHAN BORIS OF BULGARIA

The Bulgars were a nomadic Turkic people who began moving into the Balkans in the sixth century, settling permanently in the seventh. In time the Turkic and nomadic elements disappeared, giving way to the culture and language of the Slavic peoples over whom they ruled. Boris was the khan, or ruler, of the Bulgarian kingdom from 852 to 889 CE. He is the "Constantine" of Bulgaria, who converted to Christianity and began the conversion of his kingdom. Byzantine influence had long been evident in Bulgaria, and Boris's own sister had already become Christian, but the khan was wary of the hovering influence of neighboring Byzantium. To offset this, Boris appealed to the Franks, with whom he allied against the Moravian kingdom that was located between them. An exertion of Byzantine military power, however, forced him to accept baptism from Constantinople, and he adopted the baptismal name of Michael, after Emperor Michael III (842–867 CE). Boris wanted to create a Bulgarian church that was largely independent of outside authority, and he negotiated between Rome and Constantinople to achieve this, ultimately siding with Constantinople. Boris also used Christianity to centralize political and religious authority, establishing one religious leader (a Christian bishop) in place of dispersed pagan religious authority that largely rested with leading families. He also drew on Byzantine political and legal principles to bolster his authority beyond that imposed by Bulgar tradition. These changes provoked a major rebellion of leading families, which Boris brutally suppressed, paving the way for a stronger kingdom and a greater challenge to the Byzantine state.

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Slavic liturgy. By the time they reached Rome, Pope Nicholas, who had been engaged in a vehement conflict with Constantinople and Patriarch Photius, had just died. The new pope, Hadrian II (867–872 CE), did not continue this conflict (and Photius was no longer bishop) and welcomed the brothers. He was also delighted by their gift of the relics of Pope Clement that they had found in Crimea. The pope approved of the brothers' work and, concerned about German influence in the region, appointed Methodius as his representative. Methodius became bishop of Sirmium and papal legate to the Slavs. Constantine spent his final days in Rome and became a monk, taking the name Cyril, by which he is now known, just before his death on February 14, 869 CE. He is buried in the Basilica of Saint Clement at Rome.

In Moravia, Methodius continued his missionary activity among the Slavs, facing increasing hostility and encroachment by the Franks. In 870 CE, Rastislav was violently removed from power by his pro-Frankish nephew. Methodius was without a protector in the area and was condemned by a German synod of clerics. He was imprisoned for three years, until Pope John VIII (r. 872–882 CE) negotiated his release. Pope John VIII was less accepting of the Slavic liturgy, and Methodius traveled back to Rome in 880 CE, where he persuaded the pope of its value and was appointed archbishop of Pannonia.

Methodius's work translating texts and leading the church in Moravia continued, but under much harassment, and he died in 885 CE. After his death, the Franks destroyed the Moravian kingdom and purged Moravia of Methodius's followers and

negated his work. They reasserted the Latin liturgy, and Pope Stephen V (r. 885–891 CE) denounced the Slavic liturgy.

Yet, the brothers' efforts bore much fruit. Their followers, with Slavic texts in hand, had made their way to the Kingdom of the Bulgars and its khan, Boris (r. 852–889 CE), who had converted to Christianity in 864 CE. It was in this environment that that the Slavic script would be modified from the original form to what became the "Cyrillic" script used today for writing the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Russian, and other Slavic languages. Boris was quick to recognize the value of a script that was distinct from the Greek script and language as he wanted a Bulgarian church that was independent of Constantinople. He, and even more so son Symeon (893–927 CE), actively promoted the development of a Slavic literature.

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See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Franks; Khazars; Slavs

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Narses (478–573 CE)

Narses was a eunuch chamberlain of Persian and Armenian descent and a general during the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE).

Early in his reign, Justinian was threatened by a massive urban revolt known as the Nika Revolt. The circus factions, known as the Blues and the Greens, had been increasing in violence since the reign of Anastasius, and the unrest reached its zenith under Justinian. In January 532 CE, the city's prefect arrested rioters, both Blues and Greens, and ordered the execution of seven of them for murder. On January 10, three were ordered to be executed by hanging, but two of the condemned, one Blue and one Green, fell to the ground and were given refuge in a nearby church. On January 13, the gathered crowds in the Hippodrome called on the emperor to pardon them, but he refused. The mob turned angry, shouting "*nika*" ("victory"), and stormed downtown Constantinople, overrunning the prefect's headquarters and freeing all those detained inside. In the frenzy, buildings were set ablaze, which consumed the church of Hagia Sophia, a Senate house, public baths, and even a portion of the imperial palace complex. The people's demands now extended to the removal of some of Justinian's

highest officials, Praetorian Prefect John the Cappadocia and his quaestor, Tribonian, to which Justinian consented. Yet, the mob raged on.

By January 15, the crowd began to call for a new emperor, while the imperial guard could not contain the increasing urban threat. On Sunday, January 18, Justinian appeared in the imperial box in the Hippodrome with Bible in hand to try to restore order by admitting his original error and pardoning the condemned. This show of contrition failed, and the people now called on Hypatius, a senator and nephew of Emperor Anastasius I, to become emperor. Many senators, sensing (or even hoping) that Justinian's reign was collapsing, rallied in support of Hypatius. Justinian was shaken by these events and considered yielding, but Theodora rejected this proposal, declaring death preferable to abandoning the imperial throne. During this time, Narses worked among the mob to distribute money to split the opposition against Justinian. His work was overshadowed by that of Belisarius. Justinian ordered Generals Belisarius and Mundo, who had recently returned from military campaigns, to storm the Hippodrome, where the crowd had gathered to acclaim Hypatius. A massacre ensued, while Hypatius and his brother, Pompeius, were arrested and then executed. The death toll was reported to be some 30,000. Such was the toll of imposing imperial order. Justinian would face no such urban trouble for well over a decade.

In 535 CE, Justinian sent Narses to Alexandria in Egypt to ensure the episcopal throne for the candidate who was supported by the emperor and his wife, Theodora. When Bishop Timothy III of Alexandria (r. 518–535 CE) died, Theodosius was consecrated as his successor. Both bishops embraced Monophysite ("one nature") theology and rejected the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon). Yet, Monophysite theology was split into a somewhat moderate form, embraced by Timothy and Theodosius, as well as the learned patriarch of Antioch, Severus, and a more extreme form, which embraced the theology of Julian of Halicarnassus. This more radical theological party drove Theodosius from his throne and into exile, replacing him with Gainas. Justinian was trying to achieve theological unity in the empire and wanted Theodosius in office. And so, the emperor sent Narses with 6,000 troops to secure Alexandria. The magnitude of the situation is evident by the fact that Justinian sent only 5,000 troops with General Belisarius for his conquest of Italy. It took Narses several months to wrest control, and he remained there for more than a year to contain this theological civil war.

Narses's service in the Gothic War began in 538 CE. Belisarius, who was in command in this theater of war, had withstood a Gothic siege of Rome for one year and then sent northward an expeditionary force that approached Ravenna, the Gothic capital, while Narses entered Italy from the Balkans. The latter had with him 5,000 soldiers and 2,000 allied Germans (Heruls). The Gothic king Vittigis lifted the siege to defend Ravenna. Unfortunately, the Byzantine campaign was hampered by disagreement and tension between Narses and Belisarius, while the Franks brutally sacked the city of Milan. The Franks would continue to hover over northern Italy as the war raged between Byzantine and Ostrogoth. In 540 CE, Belisarius took hold of Ravenna, Vittigis, and the Ostrogothic treasury, and returned to Constantinople, as did Narses.

In 541 CE, when Praetorian Prefect John the Cappadocian, Justinian's premier financial minister, was suspected of plotting against the emperor. Justinian sent Narses to investigate. According to the historian Procopius, the plot was a scheme by Empress Theodora, supported by her friend Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, who viewed John as a rival to her power. The prefect was fired and exiled.

The Italian War did not end with the victory of 540 CE because a charismatic leader named Totila (or Baduila) rallied the Ostrogoths. Totila was the most effective Ostrogothic leader since Theoderic and would prolong the war for another decade. In 551 CE, Justinian sent Narses to Italy with a then enormous army of 30,000 soldiers. In summer 552 CE, he defeated the Ostrogoths in the region of Umbria at the Battle of Busta Gallorum, also called the Battle of Taginae, and Totila was killed. Narses then retook Rome, which marked the city's fifth change of hand during the war. Narses vanquished pockets of fortified resistance and defeated the last Ostrogothic force near Amalfi. All of Italy was securely in Byzantine hands, though a Frankish threat hovered over the north. In the fall of 552 CE, Narses defeated the Frankish invasion, bringing an end to two decades of war in Italy.

Italy may have been in imperial hands, but after two decades of conflict, the peninsula was devastated. To govern Italy and Africa, Justinian created a new position known as the exarch, who governed from Ravenna. The exarch combined civil and military power into a single position, ending the separation of civil and military authority that had begun with the reforms of Diocletian in the third century. Narses remained to rebuild Italy, and it appears that Narses served as the first exarch, until recalled by Justinian's successor, Emperor Justin II (r. 565–574 CE).

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Belisarius; Justinian; Theodora; *Groups and Organizations*: Eunuchs; Monophysites; *Key Events*: Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Nika Revolt

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Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople (ca. 386–ca. 451 CE)

Nestorius was the patriarch of Constantinople from 428 CE until his deposition by Bishop Cyril of Alexandria and the Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus) in 431 CE. The condemnation was due to Nestorius's theological stance related to the natures of Christ, seemingly separating Christ into distinct and distinguishable natures in operation, one human and one divine. This was the beginning of the religious controversy, which would continue to plague the church for several centuries and that created a permanent division because of theological differences in discussing the natures of Christ. The human and divine natures of Christ presented the central theological question at the Third (431 CE, Ephesus), Fourth (451 CE, Chalcedon), Fifth (553 CE, Constantinople), and Sixth (680 CE, Constantinople) Ecumenical Councils, and was even related to Iconoclasm and the Eighth Council (787 CE, Nicaea).

Nestorius was a Syrian prelate, who, following in the footsteps of fellow Syrian John Chrysostom, was recruited from Antioch to become the bishop of Constantinople, during the reign of Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE). Nestorius wasted no time in zealously opposing non-Christians in the city as well as all non-Nicene theologies, including the Arians.

Nestorius was a devoted student of the writings of another Antiochene, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and visited the distinguished theologian on his journey to Constantinople in 428 CE. Theodore had been a fellow student with John Chrysostom in the classroom of Libanius, and it was Chrysostom who inspired Theodore to enter the monastic life. Like John Chrysostom, Theodore was ordained priest by Bishop Flavian and was then appointed to be bishop, serving the See of Mopsuestia in southern Anatolia. Theodore's theological interpretation aimed at affirming the humanity of Christ, alongside Christ's divinity, emphasizing that salvation was possible only because of Christ's *human* experience, as the Second Adam. Theodore focused his attention on these two aspects, or natures, of Christ. Theodore died in 428 CE, and Nestorius would become the most influential expression of his theological ideas. Theodore wrote extensively, notably commentaries on the Bible, but his writings were later condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople) in 553 CE. Theodore had died in complete union with the Orthodox Church, but he was blamed later following his death for introducing a heresy known as Nestorianism. Both Theodore's actual connection to this theological position, and even Nestorius's, for that matter, remain a topic of some controversy among scholars. The sixth-century condemnation was due to political and theological expediencies during the reign of Justinian, who was desperate to achieve a bridge between Monophysite (one nature) churches in Egypt and Syria and Dyophysite (two nature or Chalcedonian) churches in the West, which divided the church in the Roman Empire. Yet, in spite of the condemnation of the council, no clear evidence exists that Theodore or Nestorius, for that matter, did not accept the two natures of Christ in one person.

The controversy began in Constantinople when some of Nestorius's followers commenced using the term "Christotokos" ("Bearer/Mother of Christ") when referring to the Virgin Mary, in place of "Theotokos" ("Bearer/Mother of God"). While this did not originate with Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople did not condemn it. For Nestorius, Christ was one person but with two separate natures, one human and one divine, yet the theological language was more easily misunderstood, particularly in an already heated politico-theological environment, and accusations of heresy were swift and tinged with competition between ecclesiastical competitors and fueled by rivalry among the greatest cities of the Empire: Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria.

Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (r. 412–444 CE) led the attack, accusing Nestorius of calling for two separate Christs, which Nestorius had not done. Cyril was the nephew and successor of Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria (r. 384–412 CE), who had orchestrated the deposition of another bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, in 404 CE. In 430 CE, the two-person view was condemned by Bishop Celestine of Rome, despite protests by Nestorius that the condemned view was not what he had been presenting. An ecumenical council was called to resolve this, meeting at Ephesus in 431 CE. At this Third Ecumenical Council, Cyril dominated proceedings from start to finish, and the verdict was certain even before the start. Nestorius understood that there would be no theological discussion and no fair hearing; his fate was sealed. And so, he resigned his patriarchate and departed for a monastery near Antioch. At the council, the position that Christ had two persons was condemned again and attributed to Nestorius, who was also condemned. That the council had acted in error by condemning a theological position and incorrectly attributing that position to Nestorius was already apparent in the fifth century, when the ecclesiastical historian Socrates stated as such, shortly after the council's proceedings.

Nestorius stayed near Antioch for five years but was then ordered into exile in Egypt in 436 CE. There, like John Chrysostom, he would be treated poorly and moved about, but also was able to keep in contact with friends and allies, through whom he learned about the two-nature decree of Bishop Leo of Rome, known as the "Tome of Leo," and the approaching Fifth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon. The latter council would proclaim two natures in one person in Christ, which Nestorius would have accepted. There was the possibility for a restoration of Nestorius's position as long as he would admit the error in not embracing Theotokos. Before this could take place, however, Nestorius died and remained anathematized.

This anathema created a permanent divide between the Christian Church in the Roman Empire and the church in Persia, which embraced Nestorian Christianity and the theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia. This church welcomed those fleeing persecution in the Roman Empire and continued to spread Nestorian Christian communities far afield into central Asia, India, and China.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Chrysostom, John; Theodosius II; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; *Key Events*: Fifth

Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus; *Primary Documents*: Document 12

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Phocas (r. 602–610 CE)

Phocas was a Byzantine emperor from 602 to 610 CE. He was a junior army commander who rose to power via an army mutiny that toppled Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE). Phocas was the first usurper to oust a reigning emperor from Constantinople. His reign was most notable for leading the empire to the brink of disaster.

Emperor Maurice inherited an empire that was endangered on three frontiers (Italy, the Balkans, and the East) and short of cash. He judged that the Persian threat was the most dangerous and kept his focus there. Meanwhile, he tried to buy the support of the Franks against the Lombards and used subsidies to keep the nomadic Avars north of the Danube. The latter approach was not effective. With the Byzantine army concentrated on Persia, the Avars turned from ally to enemy and asserted control over the northern Balkans, while Slavs began migrating into the eastern Balkans. Maurice granted tribute to the Avars, but their hold on territory south of the Danube was tolerated because the army was still occupied in the East; and the Slavs gained ground.

The empire's finances proved a persistent challenge for Maurice, who looked for ways to reduce costs. He cut the cash allowance that was allocated to soldiers to cover their cost of arms and provisions, and provided this in kind, which had been the normal procedure before the sixth century. This amounted to a pay cut and the army mutinied. It was eventually pacified in 589 CE by restoration of pay and a change in command. The pressure in the East subsided when a Persian civil war broke out. In a surprising turn, the legitimate shah, Khusro II (r. 590–608 CE), facing defeat at home, fled to the Byzantine Empire and offered to relinquish control of Armenia and strategic points on the frontier, if the emperor would help. Maurice agreed and restored Khusro II to power by force of Byzantine arms. With this, peace finally settled on the Persian frontier in 591 CE.

Maurice was then able to focus on the Balkans for the next decade. In the summer of 599 CE, he launched a campaign against Avar power, which seemed to secure the frontier, but the double bane of plague and financial problems took their toll and severe food shortages occurred in the capital, which provoked fierce rioting. The

emperor's reign was becoming increasingly unpopular, because of this shortage and the negative impact of his fiscal policies. In the summer of 602 CE, Maurice ordered his army to march north of the Balkans, under the leadership of his brother, Peter, to fight the Slavs. The emperor expected the soldiers to winter on enemy territory as a cost-saving measure. Facing a cold winter in hostile territory and without certain provisions, the army mutinied, and Peter fled. The soldiers wanted the orders rescinded, but Peter stood by his brother's decision, and, by doing so, completely lost control.

Once the army had rejected its senior leadership, it was compelled to select a new commander, and the choice fell on a junior officer named Phocas. The mighty Byzantine army that had set out to battle the Slavs now turned against Constantinople. Maurice had few troops in the capital and called on the circus factions, the Blues and the Greens, to fight in the city's defense.

The army demanded a change on the throne and offered the crown to Maurice's son Theodosius, but he refused. Next, an offer was made to Germanus, who was the son of Emperor Justinian's cousin Germanus. He hesitated and missed his chance. Phocas entered the city on November 25, 602 CE, and was proclaimed emperor. This was the first time that an emperor in Constantinople had been dethroned.

Phocas was emperor from 602 to 610 CE. He was a junior army commander who rose to power via an army mutiny that toppled Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE). Phocas was the first usurper to oust a reigning emperor from Constantinople. His reign marked the beginning of a cataclysmic war with the Persian Empire that led the empire to the brink of disaster. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Gift of Eve Herren, 1979)

Maurice and his family fled the city. He sent his oldest son, Theodosius, to make his way to Persia to ask for the help of Shah Khusro II, whom Maurice had assisted one decade earlier. The effort failed. Maurice and five of his sons were arrested, executed, and put on display. It was reported that his son Theodosius had been caught at Nicaea and executed there, but his body was not sent to Constantinople, and rumors that he had escaped would haunt the empire.

In 603 CE, Germanus joined with Maurice's widow, Constantina, and the former emperor's brother-in-law, Philippicus, to overthrow Phocas and seize the throne. The plot was discovered and Phocas punished them by making Constantina a nun and the men priests. In 605 CE, they

launched a second attempt to remove Phocas. This time, the usurper executed Germanus, exiled Constantina and her daughters, and tortured and killed three senior ministers of state who had been implicated.

Narses, the commander of the Byzantine army in the East, refused to accept Phocas as emperor and aimed at removing him from power. The general welcomed the support of Shah Khusro II, who also refused to acknowledge Phocas as legitimate emperor. Narses reported that Maurice's son Theodosius was with him and that he planned to restore him to power. Not all troops in the East supported Narses, however, and the army was split, just as Khusro's invasion began and he took possession of the (supposed) heir to the throne, Theodosius. To meet the invasion, Phocas drained the Balkans of troops and shifted all forces to the East. He negotiated with Narses, who agreed to surrender, and then had him murdered.

Khusro's armies now took Dara and advanced in Mesopotamia and Armenia, defeating Byzantine armies along the way. In addition to the military defeats, the empire struggled with a recurrence of the plague and was further depleted by famine. Phocas's support rapidly fell. In North Africa, which supplied grain to Constantinople, the exarch of Carthage, Heraclius, who was too distant for Phocas to threaten, rebelled and shut off the city's food supply. He sent his nephew Nicetas to secure control of Egypt. In 609 CE, Phocas ordered his governor of Syria to withdraw troops from the Persian campaign to maintain control of Egypt, which also provided grain for the capital. This effort ultimately failed, and the defense of Egypt was at the expense of Anatolia and Syria, which fell into Persian hands.

With Egypt secured and army prepared, the exarch's son, who was also named Heraclius, set sail from North Africa and arrived at Constantinople in October 610 CE.

Phocas found himself in nearly the identical situation as that of Maurice in 602 CE, only this time, Phocas was inside the city's walls. With a hostile force outside and few troops in the city, he called on the Greens and Blues to man the defenses, but the Greens opened the harbor to Heraclius's fleet. Turmoil ensued, with the circus factions battling one another, while Heraclius secured control. Phocas was arrested and executed, leaving Heraclius with an empire on the brink of collapse.

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See also: *Individuals*: Heraclius; Maurice; Narses; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Franks; Persians; Slavs; *Key Events*: Persians, Wars with; *Key Places*: Egypt

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Procopius (500–565 CE)

Procopius of Caesarea was one of the greatest historians of antiquity, and his three texts, *On Wars, On Buildings*, and *Secret History*, provide critical insight for understanding the era of Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE).

Procopius was born around 500 CE in the maritime city of Caesarea in the Byzantine province of Palaestina Prima. He received an excellent education and moved to Constantinople, where he became the legal adviser and secretary to a young military commander named Belisarius, who was promoted to general in 529 CE. Procopius served Belisarius's staff from 527 to 540 CE on his Persian campaign (527–531 CE) and then in North Africa and Italy. Belisarius returned to Constantinople in 540 CE and was in the city when the plague struck in 542 CE, providing an eyewitness account of that tragedy. After 540 CE, the historian did not serve with Belisarius again and continued to work on his historical projects by drawing on official documents and other sources.

Procopius wrote three works of history. His longest was the *History of the Wars of Justinian*. The historian explained that he wrote this text because:

> "He believed that the memory of these events would be a great thing and most helpful to men of the present time and to future generations as well, in case time should eve again place in a similar predicament . . ." (Book 1.1) He noted that he felt an obligation to write this, since ". . . he was aware that he was able to write this history better than anyone else, if for no other reason, because it fell to his lot, when appointed adviser to the general Belisarius, to be an eyewitness of practically all the events to be described." (Book 1.3)

Wars presented a quarter century of contemporary history at great length and detail. Procopius was a gifted writer, with expertise in classical historians (Thucydides, Herodotus, Xenophon, Polybius), under whose influence he wrote. Yet, Procopius's work is in no way derivative. *Wars* is a commanding, engaging, and clear narrative, which was organized in a unique way. Procopius divided the work into sections, each of which covered the various theaters of engagement separately. The first two books presented the Persian War, the third and fourth treated North Africa, and the fifth through seventh covered the war in Italy, as well as activity in the Balkans. Procopius completed the first seven books by 551 CE and then added an eighth book by 553 CE to bring events down to the victorious conclusion of the Italian War.

This text was admired by subsequent historians. Agathias, another author from the legal profession, writing around 580 CE, picked up the narrative where Procopius left off, continuing the account of Justinian's wars from 552 to 559 CE, though with less mastery than Procopius. Menander the Protector, who wrote during the reign of Emperor Maurice, continued Agathias's history, tracing events from 558 CE and moving beyond the reign of Justinian to 582 CE, though only fragments of this history survive.

In the *Wars*, Procopius appears evenhanded, if at times mildly critical of imperial policy, but he was restraining himself. It was unusual, even dangerous, for historians to write about contemporary events. Roman historians usually wrote about events before the then present reign because of the dangers that might come from being accurate and critical of a reigning emperor. Procopius took on the task but preserved his most critical views for a separate text known as the *Secret History*. He clarified that he wrote this text because he was not able to be impartial in his *Wars*

> so long as the people who were responsible for them were still alive [primarily referring to Theodora, who died in 548]. It would have been impossible either to evade detection by the legions of their spies and informers or, having been caught, not to suffer a most cruel death . . . I was forced to conceal the cause of many of the events that I narrated in earlier books. It is therefore incumbent on me here to reveal what had previously remained concealed. (Secret History, 1.2–3)

For modern scholars, the *Secret History* came to light only when a copy was discovered by a Vatican librarian in the 17th century. The text is a clear condemnation of Theodora and Justinian. Procopius reversed imperial ideology. Where Justinian presented himself as renewing, Procopius showed him destroying; where the emperor portrayed himself as pious, Procopius presented him as diabolical; where imperial propaganda emphasized justice and a concern for subjects, the text revealed the emperor and his wife as having no regard for law, insatiably greedy, and totally evil. He was at his most savage when treating Empress Theodora, and the *Secret History* serves as the primary narrative for learning about her life, unsympathetic as it was. Theodora and her friend and ally Antonina were at the root of destroying the state, working through their emasculated husbands, Justinian and Belisarius, respectively.

Procopius's third work, *On Buildings*, was a panegyric written at the request of the emperor. The book detailed the many building projects in the capital and provinces that the emperor built for the glorification of God (and the emperor), the defense of the empire, and the well-being of the people, including churches and fortifications, as well as civil projects like bridges and cisterns. The work was written in the 550s CE, before the collapse of Hagia Sophia's original dome in 557 CE, and highlighted imperial propaganda that emphasized the emperor's closeness to the divine.

Procopius planned to write a fourth work, an ecclesiastical history, but did not complete this task.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of; *Organization and Administration*: Writing; *Individuals*: Belisarius; Justinian; Narses; Theodora; *Primary Documents*: Document 14; Document 17; Document 18

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Rufinus (335–395 CE)

Rufinus was the praetorian prefect and senior adviser at the start of the reign of Emperor Arcadius (r. 395–408 CE). Arcadius was the son of Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE), the brother of Emperor Honorius I (r. 395–423 CE), and the father of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE).

When Theodosius I died in Milan on January 17, 395 CE, he had arranged for each son to rule half the empire, the adolescent Honorius in the West and the teenage Arcadius in the East at Constantinople. Neither emperor had any military experience, and each was left with a primary caretaker to protect imperial interests and defend the empire: the powerful half-German (Vandal) general and master of soldiers (*magister militum*) Stilicho for Honorius and Praetorian Prefect Rufinus for Arcadius. Rufinus was entrusted with Illyricum and lands farther east, with Stilicho managing lands to the west. Stilicho was the husband of Theodosius's niece, whereas Rufinus was a long-serving official in the service of Theodosius, whom he appointed master of offices in 388 and then praetorian prefect when the emperor removed the pagan Tatian from this position. Rufinus's faith was not in question. He established a monastery on his property in the Asian suburbs of Constantinople, and his sister, Silvia, made a pilgrimage from their native Acquitaine in Gaul to the Holy Land, which is recorded in Palladius's *Lausiac History*.

In 394 CE, Rufinus was left to manage affairs in Constantinople, when Emperor Theodosius marched west to confront the German general Arbogast, who was the military power behind the rebellion of the pagan Eugenius, which Theodosius suppressed. Having set his house in order, Theodosius failed to foresee that quarrels would erupt between his sons' advisers, which would undermine the security of the empire. The quarrels began the moment of Theodosius's death, when Stilicho believed that it was the emperor's intention for him to look after both emperors, viewing Rufinus as a usurper of his authority. Rufinus refused to accept Stilicho's claim.

The quarrel hampered the empire's defense against the Visigoths, whose commander, Alaric, was frustrated that he had not been appointed as master of soldiers. He expressed his feeling by rampaging up to the suburbs of Constantinople. Rufinus managed to persuade Alaric to depart from the capital, but he simply channeled his anger toward Greece. Stilicho mobilized a defense against Alaric, but Rufinus feared the potential consequences for him personally, and had Emperor Arcadius order Stilicho to return to the West, since he was on territory under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. The order also required that Stilicho return troops, which Emperor Theodosius had left in the West after suppressing the rebellion of Eugenius. As ordered, the master of soldiers withdrew and sent the requested troops to Constantinople, under the command of a loyal Visigoth named Gainas.

As Gainas approached Constantinople, the emperor and court marched out of the city to meet the troops on November 27, 395 CE. The emperor greeted the soldiers. When Rufinus did the same, he was surrounded and cut down. His head was displayed in Constantinople.

Influence at court now passed to the head chamberlain and eunuch, Eutropius, who had previously blocked Rufinus's attempt to marry his own daughter to Emperor Arcadius, who married instead Eudoxia, the strong-willed and attractive daughter of a German general. This palace soap opera offered no solace to the Balkans, where Alaric continued his assaults on Greece, raiding and pillaging unfettered. In 397 CE, Stilicho again marshaled the defense but was a second time ordered by Arcadius, now under Eutropius's influence, to withdraw. Eutropius operated under the same fear as Rufinus, that Stilicho would oust him from power. To hasten the general's withdrawal, Eutropius stirred a revolt in North Africa, which Stilicho was forced to suppress.

The Alexandrian poet Claudian, writing at the emperor's court in Milian, wrote polished Latin poems that honored Honorius and Stilicho and attacked Praetorian Prefect Rufinus and his successor, Eutropius. In his *Against Rufinus*, Claudian depicted Stilicho as a heroic figure battling the evil Rufinus, whom he consigned to punishment in hell.

After his death, Rufinus's property was confiscated by the imperial government, but the region was to bear his name: Rufinianae.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Individuals*: Arcadius; Theodosius II

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Sozomen Scholasticus (400–450 CE)

Salminius Hermias Sozomenus, or simply Sozomen, was a Christian Church historian and author of a history that commenced where Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History* left off. Eusebius's work traced the emergence of the Christian Church from the apostolic age to the conversion of Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) and his defeat of Emperor Licinius in 324 CE, which united the Roman Empire under a single monarch. Sozomen's work covered the century between the empire's unification in 324 and 439 CE, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE), to whom his history is dedicated.

The extant work of Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History* covers events only down to 425 CE. An explanation for the absence of the final book has not been definitively established and it was likely suppressed by the author himself. Sozomen's history relied heavily on a somewhat earlier text written by Socrates Scholasticus, which covered a slightly broader chronological period, from Constantine's ascension in the West in 305 to 439 CE. Socrates is notable for his careful use of sources and consideration of historical evidence, traits that are much less evident in Sozomen's work. Where Socrates analyzed, Sozomen compiled, seeking to provide an improved understanding of the period by looking at and copying from additional sources, which Socrates did not use or used much less. These sources include the history of Olympiodorus of Thebes, which no longer survives, the monastic historian Rufinus, various church records, imperial laws, and Western sources (though in Greek translation, since his grasp of Latin is uncertain), among others. This is reflected in his own plan for the book: "I have sought for records of events of earlier date, amongst the established laws appertaining to religion, amongst the proceedings of the synods of the period, amongst the innovations that rose, and in the epistles of kings and priests. Some of these documents are preserved in palaces and churches, and others are dispersed and in the possession of the learned . . . I will readily transcribe freely from any work that may tend to the elucidation of the truth" (Book 1). Sozomen was also deemed a better writer, if not the more refined historian. The purpose of his text was to demonstrate the onward progress of Orthodox Christianity and the leaders who preserved it through the struggle against heresy and other attacks. It was the task of the historian to reveal how Truth prevailed. Sozomen portrayed the church as the institution that is the very caretaker of Truth.

Neither Socrates nor Sozomen were clergy, nor were they in monastic ranks, unlike Bishop Theodoret of Cyrus, who wrote an ecclesiastical history covering the same period and copying much from Sozomen and Socrates, or the monk Palladius, whose *Lausiac History*, written around 420 CE and of much smaller scale, focused solely on the monastic movement in Egypt, the Holy Land, Syria, and Anatolia.

Socrates was from Constantinople and worked in the legal profession, to which his title *scholastikos* refers, and expressed an interest in theology and philosophy. Sozomen was also in the legal profession but, in contrast to Socrates, was a provincial. He was born in Bethelia near Gaza in Palestine and settled in Constantinople shortly after the patriarchate of John Chrysostom, whose service to the church he defends,

whereas Socrates was more critical. Sozomen showed less interest in philosophy or theology than Socrates but does provide critical insight into the development and spread of Arianism in the fourth century. Socrates was also more sympathetic to traditional classical culture, while Sozomen was drawn to monasticism and hermits. Sozomen also included information about Christian missionary efforts beyond the Roman Empire and the expansion of the faith among non-Romans, including Goths, Armenians, and Arabs. He explained: "I have had to deliberate whether I ought to confine myself to the recital of events connected with the church under the Roman government; but it seemed more advisable to include, as far as possible, the record of transactions relative to religion among the Persians and barbarians" (Book 1).

In the late sixth century, another lawyer, Evagrius Scholasticus, built on the historical foundations established by Eusebius and then Socrates and Sozomen. Evagrius's *Ecclesiastical History* continued the narrative where Socrates and Sozomen left off, tracing his history of the Christian Church from the reign of Theodosius II to his own day (593 CE) during the reign of Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE).

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Individuals*: Arcadius; Chrysostom, John; Constantine the Great; Maurice; Theodosius II; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Places*: Egypt

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Theodora (500–548 CE)

Theodora was a Roman empress and the wife of Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), to whom she was a partner in power. Justinian referred to Theodora as "our most pious consort given us by God" (*Novella* 8.1). Their partnership is portrayed in stunning mosaics in the Church of Saint Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, which date from the 540s CE. There, one sees the empress in magnificent flowing imperial regalia, with precious jewels strewn from her crown, flanked by eunuchs and ladies of court, holding a gold chalice as an offering, while calmly gazing across the sanctuary toward the image of her imperial partner, Justinian.

Theodora was one of many women who were at the center of power in Byzantine history—such as Pulcheria in the fifth century; Sophia, Theodora's own niece, who ruled during the reign of Justin II (r. 565–578 CE); and Irene, who ruled independently

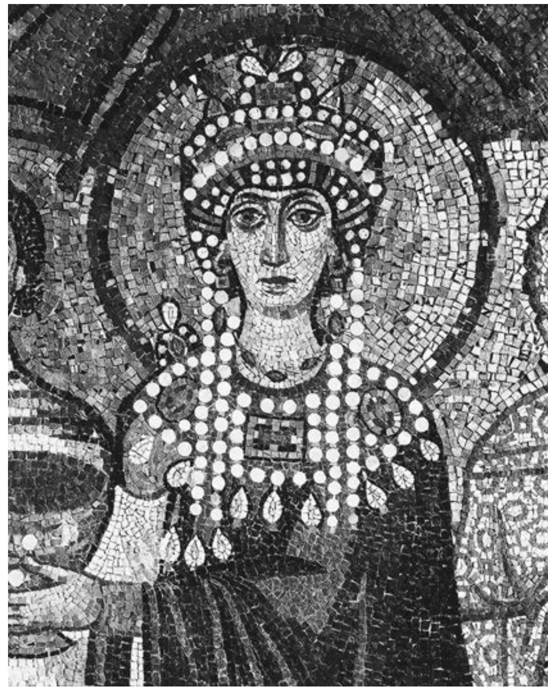
from 797 to 802 CE—but none of these encountered a historian who so thoroughly shaped their image for prosperity, as Theodora had in Procopius. As a result, Theodora may be the most popularly known woman in the history of Byzantium, yet what we know of her is largely molded by this one extremely hostile source. Procopius's *Secret History* provides the primary narrative for information on her life, recounting in vivid detail even the most scurrilous point. The historian blamed the imperial couple for ruining the empire, and he was determined to ensure that posterity recognized this. He described every act with a negative slant, even depicting with his poisonous pen Theodora's founding of a monastery to help former sex workers.

Like Justinian, Theodora was from humble origins. She was the daughter of a bear trainer who worked for the circus faction known as the Greens, which provided public entertainment in the Hippodrome. When her father died, her mother quickly remarried and entreated the Greens to appoint her new husband as the new bear keeper, but they offered the job to someone else. She made Theodora and her two sisters plea directly to the Greens in the Hippodrome, but to no avail. The rival circus faction, the Blues, however, was amenable to the choice. The family made a living in public entertainment, and the girls became stage performers, a profession that was interrelated with the sex industry. Procopius recounted Theodora's disreputable and obscene activities in this period of her life and emphasized how the women of Constantinople avoided Theodora out of disgust.

The young Theodora left Constantinople with a lover named Hekebolos, who had received an appointment as provincial governor in North Africa. The relationship soured, and she was discarded. Theodora made her way to Alexandria and then back to the capital, where she met an actress who worked for the Blues, while also serving as an informant for the palace. This was the connection through which Theodora met Justinian. She became his mistress and he moved her into an imperial palace, though they were prevented from marrying because of an imperial law forbidding marriage between senators and actresses. Empress Euphemia, wife of Emperor Justin, wanted this law enforced. After the empress's death, Justin promulgated a new law that allowed marriage between *repentant* actresses and senators, and the couple was married. Theodora's sister Comito also married "up," becoming the wife of Sittas, who became one of Justinian's generals, while her friend Antonina married Belisarius, one of Justinian's most important military commanders.

On the death of Justin in 527 CE, Justinian became emperor and crowned his wife Augusta. From her imperial throne, Theodora demonstrated a concern for those who endured the same fate that she had in childhood. The imperial couple established the Convent of Repentance in a suburb of Constantinople to care for former prostitutes. They also attempted to purge the city of pimps who ran brothels. Theodora also freed women who had been bought for sex trafficking by paying the purchase price to the traffickers and freeing the women from bondage. Justinian took a further step of banning prostitution entirely and closing brothels. Imperial law also made it illegal to force women to work as public entertainers or to compel them to stay, if they wanted to leave, even if they had previously sworn an oath to stay, and the law banned such oaths in the future. The law also removed barriers preventing marriage between

women from any walk of life and dignitaries. In addition, women taken into custody for whatever reason were not to be held under the care of male guards, where they could be assaulted, but placed in convents, where they would not face the threat of assault. Legislation also sought to provide increased financial protection for women. These efforts highlight the imperial couple's concern for the well-being of those who were easily exploited, though they had little permanent impact on the operation of the sex trade in Byzantium.



This sixth-century image depicts Empress Theodora in the Church of Saint Vitale in Ravenna, the Byzantine capital of Italy. Adjacent to this image is one of her husband, Emperor Justinian, who launched the reconquest of Italy, after successfully taking North Africa. Although neither Justinian nor Theodora ever set foot in Italy their impact and presence was notably evident here. (DeAgostini/Getty Images)

One the most celebrated incidents in Theodora's life occurred during a massive urban revolt in Constantinople known as the Nika Revolt, which nearly toppled Justinian from power. The circus factions, known as the Blues and the Greens, had been increasing in violence since the reign of Anastasius, and it reached its zenith under Justinian. In January 532 CE, the city's prefect arrested rioters, both Blues and Greens, and ordered the execution of seven of them for murder. On January 10, three were ordered to be executed by hanging, but two of the condemned, one a Blue and one a Green, fell to the ground and were given refuge in a nearby church. On January 13, the gathered crowds in the Hippodrome called on the emperor to pardon them, but he refused. The mob turned angry, shouting "*nika*" ("victory"), and stormed downtown Constantinople, overrunning the prefect's headquarters and freeing all those detained inside. In the frenzy, buildings were set ablaze, which consumed the church of Hagia Sophia, a Senate house, public baths, and even a portion of the imperial palace complex. The people's demands now extended to the removal of some of Justinian's highest officials, Praetorian Prefect John the Cappadocia and his quaestor, Tribonian, to which Justinian consented. Yet, the mob raged on. By January 15, the crowd began to call for a new emperor, while the imperial guard could not contain the increasing urban threat. On Sunday, January 18, Justinian appeared in the imperial box in the Hippodrome with Bible in hand to try to restore order by admitting his

original error and pardoning the condemned. This show of contrition failed, and the people now called on Hypatius, a senator and nephew of Emperor Anastasius I, to become emperor. Many senators, sensing (or even hoping) that Justinian's reign was collapsing, rallied in support of Hypatius. Justinian was shaken by these events and considered yielding, but Theodora stood firm, declaring:

> I believe that flight, now more than ever, is not in our interest even if it brought us to safety. For it is not possible for a man who is born not also t die, but for one who has reigned it is intolerable to become a fugitive. May I never be parted from the purple! May I never live to see the day when I will not be addressed as Mistress by all in my presence! Emperor, if you wish to save yourself, that is easily arranged. We have much money; there is the sea; and here are our ships. But consider where, after you have saved yourself, you would then gladly exchange safety for death. For my part, I like that old saying, namely that kingship is a good burial shroud. (*Wars*, Book 1.32)

Utilizing loyal commanders who had recently returned from the Persian frontier, he ordered Belisarius and Mundo to storm the Hippodrome, where the crowd had gathered to acclaim Hypatius. A massacre ensued, while Hypatius and his brother, Pompeius, were arrested and then executed. The death toll was reported to be some 30,000. Such was the toll of imposing imperial order, and Justinian would face no such urban trouble for well over a decade.

Theodora was equally decisive at eliminating challengers to her authority. Procopius narrated the fate of individual after individual who fell afoul of the empress and was removed or "disappeared." In 542 CE, after Justinian had been infected by plague, a few of his highest officers discussed the potential upcoming succession, news of which reached the empress. According to the historian, she summoned the commander Bouzes, who was relieved of his duty and imprisoned, until Theodora decided to restore him, shaken as he was by the trauma. Belisarius too was relieved of command, until reappointed to Italy by Justinian in 544 CE. Theodora also machinated to destroy the career of Praetorian Prefect John the Cappadocian, a close adviser to Justinian, and succeeded in 541 CE. She also promoted favorites to positions of power, and Procopius was likely further incensed that he was ignored.

According to Procopius, Theodora's daily schedule was as follows:

> She paid more attention to the care of her body than was necessary but still less than she would have liked. She would rush to her bath first thing in the morning but would tarry there for a long while. Having bathed so sumptuously, she went to breakfast. After breakfast, she rested. At lunch and dinner, she liked to taste every variety of food and drink. Sleep always took hold of her for long stretches, her daytime naps lasting until night set on and she slept again at night until the sun rose. Yet even while she had lapsed into such an indulgent and luxurious lifestyle, wasting away the greater part of the day, still she insisted on governing the entire empire of the Romans. (Procopius, *Secret History*, 15.6–9)

Yet, her indulgent schedule always made room for her insatiable pursuit of greed, according to the historian. Theodora wanted her grandson, Anastasius, to marry the daughter of Belisarius and her friend Antonina. One advantage of this marriage would be the transfer of wealth from Belisarius to Theodora, through her grandson, since Joannina was their only child. Antonina did not want this and stalled as long as possible. Theodora then arranged for the young, unwed couple to live together and, as she planned, this resulted in their falling in love. Yet, when Theodora died in 548 CE, Antonina forcibly separated the married couple, despite her daughter's pleas. Neither Belisarius nor Justinian ever intervened, which for Procopius was further evidence of their weakness before powerful women.

As a supporter of Monophysite Christianity, Theodora protected Monophysite leaders, even as Justinian was persecuting such leaders elsewhere. Procopius alleged in his *Secret History* that this was an imperial strategy to show support for contradictory theologies from the same imperial palace. In 533 CE, Justinian shifted to negotiation, welcoming Monophysite leaders for discussion and trying to forge a compromise by rejecting extreme Monophysite theology, while agreeing on what they could mutually condemn. He focused on a denunciation of three authors deemed "pro-Nestorian:" Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Ibas of Edessa, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Justinian received an agreement from the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and, through compulsion, Rome. This was confirmed by the Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople 553 CE but did not resolve the fundamental problem. It was impossible to find a theological solution that would be acceptable both to Rome and to the Monophysite leaders of the East. While Justinian struggled, Theodora became a patron of the development of a Monophysite ecclesiastical organization, separate from the Orthodox one. She arranged for the appointment of Monophysite John of Amida (also known as John of Ephesus) to serve as a missionary to pagans in the empire and was said to have converted some 70,000. She also ensured the consecration of Bishop Jacob Bar'adai (ca. 500–578 CE), whom she had been protecting in Constantinople. He became the organizer of the Monophysite Church in Syria. Because of his work, the Monophysite Christian Church in Syria is sometimes referred to as the "Jacobite" Church.

Theodora died, apparently of cancer, on June 28, 548 CE. She was buried in a mausoleum in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, one of the buildings restored by Emperor Justinian. Her memory was condemned by Procopius in his *Secret History* but was remembered with fondness by Monophysite authors, including John of Ephesus in his *Lives of the Eastern Saints*.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Individuals*: Belisarius; Irene; Justinian; Procopius; *Groups and Organizations*: Monophysites; *Key Events*: Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Nika Revolt; *Primary Documents:* Document 17

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Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE)

Emperor from 408–450 CE, Theodosius II was the son of Emperor Arcadius (r. 395–408 CE) and grandson of Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE). He was the last male member of the Theodosian Dynasty. Theodosius II was a patron of higher education and appointed 31 professors of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, and law in the capital. Constantinople served not only as the premier imperial political center, but also as a center of culture and learning. This university produced cultured elites and civil servants who were needed to run the imperial administration. In 429 CE, the emperor established a commission to produce a codification of Roman law, which was completed and published in 438 CE. This Theodosian Code was the first collection in the history of the empire and organized laws from the reign of Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE) to Theodosius II.

When Emperor Arcadius died in Constantinople in 408 CE, he left his seven-year-old son, Theodosius II, on the throne. The emperor's brother, Honorius, continued to reign in the West. The leading figure in the East was Praetorian Prefect Anthemius, who had assumed this role late in Arcadius's life.

The immediate danger for the empire was posed by the Huns, who had already crossed the Danube and were kept away only by Roman payments. Anthemius sought to ensure peace with Persia, though war later broke out in 421 CE, when the shah began persecuting Christians. A cease-fire was quickly arranged with a return to the status quo because both empires were feeling the pressure of the Huns. The threat of the Huns added to the ongoing German threat (and the city of Rome was then just recently sacked by the Goths in 410 CE) and prompted Anthemius to build a massive new fortification for Constantinople, which was completed in 413 CE. The new walls of the city encompassed a much larger area than had the fourth-century Constantinian wall and were immensely more effective as a defensive barrier, keeping out every foreign invader until the Ottoman conquest in 1453. This fortification is commonly referred to as the "Theodosian Walls," crediting the child emperor with the work of

his more accomplished senior official. Anthemios also built the *Hexamilion* ("six-mile wall") across the Isthmus of Corinth in Greece to protect it from the rampages of Germans and other marauders.

The Huns remained the greatest danger for the empire, and imperial foreign policy relied upon subsides to keep them under control. The payments increased when Attila (r. 434–453 CE) emerged as the leader of the Huns. Attila extorted an enormous annual revenue from the state and was invulnerable to Roman arms. The empire was finally emancipated only after the death of Theodosius II, when his successor, the general and emperor Marcian (r. 450–457 CE), refused to pay the annual subsidy. Having squeezed the empire for decades, Attila turned his attention to the West.

Anthemius consecrated the new Hagia Sophia in 415 CE, the previous foundation having been destroyed in the riots of 404 CE, which broke out after the deposition and exile of Bishop John Chrysostom. Anthemius served the emperor and the empire remarkably well and then died. Stepping into his leadership position was Theodosius's sixteen-year-old sister, Pulcheria, who had been crowned Augusta in 414 CE and who now became the leading figure of court. She had made a vow of celibacy, which protected her from the threat of marriage and becoming a tool in a male power play for the throne. This vow gave her an autonomy that she would leverage to dominate the palace, which largely resembled a monastery, for much of her life. Her position was, at times, challenged by Athenais-Eudokia, whom the emperor married in 421 CE.

The imperial siblings' zeal for Christianity was equal to their intolerance of other faiths. Paganism had already been outlawed by Theodosius I, and its continued demise was welcomed by the court, which ignored the horrific murder of the female pagan philosopher Hypatia in Alexandria in 415 CE. Judaism also felt overt Christian hostility as they banned the construction of synagogues and expelled Jews from the imperial administration and the legal profession. The emperors were equally zealous to enforce "proper" Christian theology, even as the period spawned the Christological Controversy that would permanently split the church.

AELIA EUDOCIA (401–460 CE)

Aelia Eudocia (Aelia Eudocia Augusta) was the wife of Theodosius II. Born Athenais, the daughter of the pagan philosopher Leontius from Athens, she was famous for her education and beauty. Upon her marriage in 421 CE, Athenais was required to renounce paganism, convert to Christianity, and assume the name Eudocia. Her conversion was followed by the founding of a Christian university at Constantinople, which was designed to take the place of the Athenian academy. Eudocia was extremely proud of her Hellenic ancestry and culture, and she was thought to have dominated her husband for many years. Eudocia had a poetic gift that was reflected in her poetry and literary works, which perfectly intertwined her Christian faith and Greek heritage. The empress spent part of her life traveling in Antioch and Jerusalem, where she contributed to many building improvements.

Ljudmila Djukic

The controversy commenced in Constantinople when some of Patriarch Nestorius's followers began using the term "Christotokos" ("Bearer/Mother of Christ") when referring to the Virgin Mary, in place of "Theotokos" ("Bearer/Mother of God"). While this did not originate with Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople did not condemn it. For Nestorius, Christ was one person but with two separate natures, one human and one divine, yet the theological language was more easily misunderstood, particularly in an already heated politico-theological environment, and accusations of heresy were swift and tinged with competition between ecclesiastical competitors and fueled by rivalry among the greatest cities of the empire: Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria.

Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (r. 412–444 CE) led the attack, accusing Nestorius of calling for two separate Christs, which Nestorius had not done. Cyril was the nephew and successor of Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria (r. 384–412 CE), who had orchestrated the deposition of another bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom in 404 CE. An ecumenical council was called to resolve this, meeting at Ephesus in 431 CE. At this Third Ecumenical Council, Cyril dominated proceedings from start to finish, and the verdict was certain even before the start. Nestorius understood that there would be no theological discussion and no fair hearing; his fate was sealed. At the council, the position that Christ had two persons was condemned again and attributed to Nestorius, who was also condemned.

Theodosius II, grandson of Theodosius the Great and son of the emperor Arcadius, reigned from 408 to 450 CE. Among his most notable achievements were the creation of universities in Constantinople and the Theodosian Code, which compiled imperial legal enactments from the third to the fifth centuries. Theodosius's code was also an important influence on Justinian I's sixth-century law code, the *Corpus Juris Civilis,* which incorporated and revised much of the former's legislation. (G. Dagli Orti/De Agostini/Getty Images)

The Christological Controversy continued unabated. A monk in Constantinople named Eutyches taught that Christ had only one nature, which was condemned by Bishop Flavian of Constantinople. The Bishop of Alexandria again intervened, as had his predecessors Theophilus and Cyril before. The issue was taken up at the Second Council of Ephesus in 449 CE, which was

supported by the emperor. The bishop of Alexandria led the council, which was a violent affair and resulted in the condemnation of Flavian, who was deposed and soon died from the violent treatment. This council was called a "robber council" by Pope Leo III and this title has stuck, since its decisions were made without consulting many bishops, including those of the West.

When Theodosius II died on a hunting accident in 450 CE, power remained with his sister and Augusta, Pulcheria, who agreed to marry the general Marcian, after he vowed to respect her celibacy and to summon an ecumenical council to address the Christological Controversy. This would be the Council of Chalcedon, the Fifth Ecumenical Council, which met in 451 CE and overturned the decision of the Robber Council. Pulcheria died in 453 CE, with much grieving in the city. She is considered a saint in the Orthodox and Catholic churches today; her brother is not.

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See also: *Individuals*: Arcadius; Chrysostom, John; Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Events*: Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Walls of Theodosius (Constantinople)

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Zeno (r. 474–491 CE)

Tarasicodissa, who adopted a more traditional Byzantine name, Zeno, was an Isaurian tribesman who became a Byzantine military commander and then emperor from 474–491 CE.

Isauria was a rugged and mountainous region in southern Anatolia that was renowned for brigandage, requiring repeated imperial attention over the centuries, whenever Isaurian raids spilled into neighboring provinces. The empire began to recruit Isaurians into the army, and by the reign of Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE), there was an Isaurian commander who took the name Zeno (not to be confused with the Isaurian emperor of the same name), defending Constantinople against the threat of Attila the Hun in 447 CE. When Emperor Theodosius died in 450 CE, his sister Pulcheria chose a military commander named Marcian as the next emperor. Aspar,

the Alan *magister militum* and most dominant military figure of the day, supported this choice. Aspar served as a "kingmaker" in the East while the Germanic commander Ricimer played the same role in the West. Although Alans were not Germanic, Aspar worked with support from and in alliance with Gothic and other Germanic troops and commanders. When Marcian died in 457 CE, Aspar ensured the promotion of another subordinate military figure, who became Emperor Leo I. To counter this Germanic influence, Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474 CE) heavily recruited Isaurians into the Byzantine military.

Tarasicodissa entered center stage of Byzantine politics in 466 CE, when he provided information to Emperor Leo about the treasonous activity of Ardabur, the son of Aspar. Ardabur was removed from his post, but Aspar remained untouchable. Leo appointed Tarasicodissa to the military post of *comes domesticorum* and fortified his bond with the loyal commander by marrying him to his daughter Ariadne. Tarasicodissa's entry into the highest ranks of imperial service was marked by his adoption of a new name, Zeno, which was both a more pleasant-sounding Greek name to Byzantine ears and emulated the earlier Isaurian commander in imperial service. Zeno's military influence expanded with his appointment as *magister militum* in Thrace 467/8–469 CE. Aspar saw the rise of Zeno as a direct threat. He fomented a mutiny against Zeno in Thrace and wanted his son Patricius to marry Leo's daughter Leontia. This did not stop Zeno's ascent. The emperor named him *magister militum* in the East in 469–471 CE, while Aspar continued to intrigue to fortify the power of his own family. The situation in the capital was extremely volatile. Emperor Leo invited Aspar and Ardabur to the palace to negotiate a solution to the mayhem, where he had them murdered. This event outraged Aspar's Gothic troops, who joined forces with the Ostrogothic general Theoderic Strabo and ravaged Thrace. To pacify the situation, Leo appointed Theoderic Strabo *magister militum* in the emperor's presence and made Zeno the other *magister militum*, with the latter's strength resting on Isaurian and not German soldiers.

On Leo's death in 474 CE, imperial power passed to the emperor's seven-year-old grandson, Leo, the child of Zeno and Ariadne, under the protection of the boy's father. When the child died later that year, the throne was left to Zeno alone. Verina, wife of Emperor Leo I, refused to accept that imperial power might slip out of her hands. She plotted against Zeno, allying with Illus, another Isaurian commander, and forced Zeno to flee Constantinople for the safety of Isauria, while Verina's brother Basiliscus seized the throne and welcomed a massacre of Isaurians in Constantinople. In response, Illus pursued Zeno to Isauria, but then, because of the recent events, threw in his lot with Zeno. Basiliscus ordered his nephew, Armatus, to march against the Isaurians, but he also switched sides. Zeno returned to Constantinople in 476 CE and regained the throne. He exiled Armatus and ensured the death of Basiliscus, but left Verina unharmed. Illus ensured his own safety by holding Zeno's brother, Longinus, as a hostage in Isauria. Later, when Verina plotted to have Illus assassinated, Zeno allowed him to keep her also in captivity in Isauria. This provoked yet another uprising in the capital, led by Verina's son-in-law, Marcian, who was defeated and exiled.

Since Theoderic Strabo had supported Basiliscus, Zeno fired him and allied with another Ostrogothic leader, Theoderic the Amal, who had spent a decade in Constantinople. The emperor appointed the Amal as Strabo's replacement. Yet, both groups of Ostrogoths joined forces against the empire, and Zeno was forced to return the title of *magister militum* in the emperor's presence back to Strabo, which outraged Theoderic the Amal into plundering the Balkans. Theoderic Strabo then attacked Constantinople, but was driven back by the city's walls and the defense of Illus. He turned to plunder but died by an accidental fall from his horse.

While the emperor struggled to preserve the security of the empire, he also worked for theological unity. From the time of the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451 CE, the empire was split by a church dispute over Christology. At issue was a disagreement about how to understand the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures. Chalcedon declared that Christ was one person with two natures, one divine and one human, while opponents of the council argued that the two separate natures had somehow merged into one, hence the name for this theological view, Monophysite ("one nature"). The church leadership was split, and this had a detrimental impact on imperial unity. In 482 CE, Zeno, in collaboration with Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople, issued an edict, called the *Henoticon* ("Edict of Union"). The *Henoticon* sought a compromise by condemning the extreme one-nature and two-nature positions (of theologians Nestorius and Eutyches, respectively), affirming the first three ecumenical councils, and completely ignoring the fourth. The *Henoticon* was an attempt to keep Antioch and Alexandria (which were mostly Monophysite) aligned with Constantinople. Yet, due to equivocating about Chalcedon, the emperor lost Rome, which broke ecclesiastical ties with the imperial capital. This Acacian Schism kept Rome and Constantinople in different theological camps from 484 until 519 CE.

In the aftermath of the *Henoticon*, the Isaurian commander Illus, who supported Chalcedon, rebelled, while Theoderic the Amal continued rampaging in the Balkans. Zeno pacified Theoderic by appointing him *magister militum* in the emperor's presence and honoring him with a consulship. In return, Zeno gained access to Theoderic's troops, which he sent to Syria against Illus, who proclaimed another Isaurian, named Leontius, as emperor in 484 CE. The imperial troops defeated Illus and Leontius, who fled to Isauria. They were pursued and killed, during which time Verina also died.

Meanwhile, relations between Zeno and Theoderic deteriorated again. The Ostrogoths again pillaged Thrace and marched on Constantinople, where they severed the city's aqueducts. To find a way to remove the Gothic threat, Zeno offered Theoderic tribute and a unique proposition, namely, the opportunity to become the legitimate ruler of Italy, where imperial control of Italy had completely ended. In 476 CE, the Germanic military commander Odoacer had deposed Emperor Romulus Augustulus and in 480 CE, Julius Nepos, the last recognized claimant of the imperial throne, was assassinated. Zeno did not recognize Odoacer's right to hold Italy and proposed that Theoderic eliminate him and rule as the legitimate imperially sanctioned authority. Theoderic accepted. The Ostrogoths migrated from the Balkans to Italy, which was secured in three years. Theoderic ruled Italy until his death in 526 CE.

Zeno was not a distinguished military commander but successfully guided the empire through a highly tumultuous period. Surviving plots, assassination attempts, revolts, civil conflict, and Ostrogothic assaults, Zeno died of natural causes in 491 CE. Zeno's widow, Ariadne, selected Anastasius, a member of his civil administration, as his successor.

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See also: *Individuals*: Anastasius, Flavius; *Groups and Organizations*: Monophysites; *Key Events*: *Henoticon*; Rome, Fall of

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Groups and Organizations

OVERVIEW ESSAY

This section explores the complex structure of the Byzantine Empire through 30 entries on social, religious, and professional groups and organizations that formed the loose yet strong imperial social fabric. The section also includes entries on ethnic groups, such as the Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs, which were part of the history of the Byzantine Empire from the late Roman Empire until the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Ethnic Migrations

Eight entries are dedicated to emerging ethnic groups, whose unpredicted, and mostly violent, movements and campaigns from the beginning of the 5th century onward changed both the physical outline of the Byzantine Empire and its internal landscape. During the Migration Period, also called the Barbarian Invasions, which occurred roughly between 300 and 700 CE in Europe, the western frontier of the Byzantine Empire was affected by migrating tribes of Avars, Bulgars, Slavs, Franks, and Normans, all of which are described in separate entries. The Avar state existed a few centuries before being conquered by the Franks, who established the most powerful Christian kingdom in early medieval Western Europe. The Bulgars and Slavs succeeded in forming their own states, whose history and future would be closely related to the history of the Byzantine Empire, whether as allies or as bitter enemies. As brave conquerors and skilled political rulers, the Normans played significant roles in the establishment of several states in various parts of Europe. The Khazars, a confederation of Turkic-speaking tribes, dominated what is today the southeastern part of modern European Russia and created a large commercial empire on the trade route that once connected Europe and China. The eastern frontier of the Byzantine Empire was subjected to many changes in the early period due to persistent assaults by the Persians until the 7th century CE, when the expansion of Islam severely threatened both empires. From the 8th century until the fall of the Constantinople in the 15th century, almost all Byzantine energy was focused on stopping the advancing Muslim forces.

Religious Groups and Organizations

The turbulent religious life of the empire from the fourth to the ninth centuries is introduced by five entries on religious groups that participated in the never-ending dispute over the nature of Christ. The early attempts to formulate a definition of the Christian faith resulted in creation of Christian doctrines that were widely accepted and taught. In the fourth century, the Arians became the first group to rise against this orthodoxy with their explanation of God's uniqueness and the nature of the Christ's substance. In the next century, the Nestorians stressed the independence of the divine and human natures of the Christ. In reaction, the Monophysites asserted that there was only one nature of Jesus, divine, rather than two, divine and human. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Iconoclastic Controversy over the use of religious icons led to the formation of two opposing groups, both of which had periods of dominance. Iconoclasts considered the use of icons to be contrary to the Second Commandment, while Iconodules strongly supported their veneration. Two entries in the section, on anchorites and cenobites, cover forms of Byzantine monasticism, which was an expression of Christian devotion that led one to withdraw from the world and live an exemplary ethical life. Anchorites and cenobites represent a form of social subgroups whose daily life rested on a religious, spiritual basis. Unlike anchorites, who lived in small cells adjoining religious buildings, cenobites gathered in a specific type of communal organization.

Social Structure of Byzantine Society

The family was the basic social unit of stratified Byzantine society; it acted both as a foundation of the whole community and as the substructure of its economic development. On the top of the social pyramid stood the omnipotent emperor followed by the *dynatoi*, an upper class comprising wealthy and "powerful" representatives of the church and the lay aristocracy. On the other extreme of the scale were the "poor" or *aporoi*, the Byzantine free tenant farmers and destitute town dwellers. The moderately wealthy provincial landowners and town-based elite comprised the middle stratum of society or the "gentry" rank. A clearly identified middle class, *mesoi*, appeared as such during the Paleologue period (1261–1453). Two entries recount the development in the late Roman and the early Byzantine period of social categories remarkable for their economic force: *coloni*, the majority of peasants and the strongest productive force in agriculture, and *curiales*, the merchants, businessmen, and midlevel landowners who served on their city council (*curia*) as local magistrates and *decurions*.

Development of Professional Associations

Professional organizations hold a distinguished place in the advancement of the Byzantine economy. The Byzantine Empire inherited from Roman times the institution of *collegia*, private associations that shared a common profession and worshipped a common god and which later evolved into more complex organizations. From the

ninth century onward, economic growth made their flourishing possible, and their status became strictly regulated by the imperial government and supervised by local authorities. The professional associations were unions of craftsmen and professionals, mainly in the Byzantine cities. Demes could be classified in the same body since they started as organizations of chariot racers and their supporters that could eventually exert a strong impact on the political life of the empire. They acquired the characteristics of political parties in some periods. In the late Byzantine period, new political factors became important. The Praetorian Guards were household troops and bodyguards of the Roman emperors; at the beginning of the fourth century, they were dismissed as soon as their power surpassed certain limits. An inevitable result of the confrontation between Christianity and Islam was the formation of secret societies, such as the Knight Templars, warrior monks who protected Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land, and a Shia group known as the Assassins, who fought against other Muslim sects and their religious adversaries.

Finally, the section contains two entries on the peculiarities of imperial society: *venationes* and eunuchs. The former were initially exhibitions and fights with wild animals, which needed to be softened with the rise of Christianity and were ultimately abolished in the sixth century. The latter were castrated men who had a vital role in the functioning of the empire through their participation in its social and professional life on all levels.

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Anchorites

The anchorites were Christians who in the early period of Christianity sought to withdraw from the world, usually living in the small cell adjoining a bigger religious building. In the Roman period the Greek verb *anachorein*, meaning "to withdraw, to retreat," had significance "to escape military service or taxes by retreating into the desert." Later, it became an important term in ascetic theology denoting an ascetic's retreat into the desert. It is considered a stage in the development of monasticism

following the way of life based on solitude, celibacy, poverty, and the idea of torturing the body to save the soul.

Since ancient times, religious people have been inspired to seek lives of solitude, moved by the belief that spiritual fulfillment can be found only in the refusal of society's expectations. They would withdraw from the world to know themselves better through self-knowledge and to establish a more intimate connection with God. The anchorites lived in small, four-walled cells attached to a religious building. The grave-like environment inspired many writers to call them "living dead." Contrary to the eremitic seclusion of hermits, who could at least in theory change locations, anchorites were permanently imprisoned within the walls of their cell, or "anchor hold." They continued to be a part of this world and yet were explicitly out of it. Retreating to the desert in a restricted, spiritual space, they would put in a great effort to better confront themselves. They were engaged in the spiritual battle with themselves that they fought against the temptation and vices of the world.

Saint Anthony and Saint Paul the Hermit were the founders of Christian monasticism. Saint Paul the Hermit is celebrated by Saint Anthony as the first hermit. Monasticism developed in the third century CE, especially in Egypt, with two important monastic centers. One was in the desert of Nitria, by the western bank of the Nile, with Abba Ammoun (died in 356 CE) as its founder, and other was in the desert of

Saint Anthony was perhaps the most famous and influential of the anchoritic desert fathers. Born in Egypt in the mid-third century to wealthy parents, he abandoned the world, gave his wealth to the poor, and withdrew into the Egyptian desert to dedicate his life to the attainment of spiritual perfection. (Matthew Herbst)

PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS IN BYZANTIUM

The philanthropic institutions of Byzantium represent the main mechanism through which Christian generosity was expressed and aid and attention to the destitute were offered. In the Byzantine world, perception of philanthropy was not focused on the poor. Those who should receive help and charity were physically unable to work: the elderly, the disabled, the patients, the orphans, and especially those who did not have relatives to take care of them. The concern for these people was proved through activities of special institutions that were founded and managed by the state, the church, and wealthy individuals. The foundation and operation of such institutions became a common practice in the Byzantine Empire, and it was imported later to the West. The best-known philanthropic institutions in Constantinople were hospitals, hostels, and orphanages. Hospitals provided medical care for those who did not have the financial capacity to pay for a doctor. *Xenodocheia*, or hostels, provided hospitality, an additional aspect of philanthropy, which was admired in Christian thought. They served poor travelers and wayfarers who did not have the possibility of residing in an inn. For this reason, *xenodocheia* were found frequently in the countryside as buildings adjoining monasteries. Moreover, the Byzantine administration was greatly preoccupied with the care and upbringing of orphan children, both legally and a practically. The upbringing of orphans was performed by relatives and foster families, as well as monasteries. The role of the institution called *Orphanotropheion* was to accommodate children with no foster parents, abandoned babies, or children who had lost their parents.

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Skete, south of Nitria, with Saint Makarios of Egypt (died ca. 330 CE) as its founder. These monks were anchorites following the monastic ideal of Saint Anthony. They lived by themselves, gathering together for common worship on Saturdays and Sundays only.

Saint Anthony was born into a wealthy family in Upper Egypt about 245 CE. He was a leader of the earliest Christian solitaries, known as the Desert Fathers, monks who settled in the Egyptian desert in the third and fourth centuries. Therefore, he is also known as Anthony of Egypt, Anthony of the Desert, and Anthony the Anchorite. Firstly, he organized departures to the wilderness that preceded his retirement from the Nile Valley. Anthony himself, while going through the desert deeper and deeper, and assuming that was in perfect loneliness and harmony with the Lord, unexpectedly discovered Saint Paul the Hermit, who was 113 years old at the time and already established in the distant region. Anthony spent 85 years in the desert solitude dedicating himself to self-discipline and asceticism. Despite that, his fame spread out and Athanasius the Great even composed his biography. Although written originally in Greek about 360 CE, Evagrius of Antioch translated it into Latin about 370 CE, making it accessible to the Latin-speaking West. Saint Anthony died in 336 CE.

Anthony himself did not organize or create a monastery, but a community grew up around him based on his way of living an ascetic and isolated life. Many followed this anchorite to the Red Sea Mountains and lived around his cave to pursue his spiritual

guidance. Some scholars consider this the second phase in the development of monasticism, sometimes known as "collective eremitism," where settlements of solitaries emerged around one person, a saint. Their aim was not only to achieve initiation and orientation, but also for the purposes of self-defense and survival in the harsh conditions of the desert. A disabled anchorite in this remote wilderness could easily die because of lack of food and water, and being observed by another anchorite was a sort of protection. Such settlements began to flourish in other parts of the country. Apart from Pispir in the Eastern Desert, they appeared in the Thebaid region in Upper Egypt as well as the Nitrean Valley in the desert to the west of the Nile delta.

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See also: *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; *Groups and Organizations*: Cenobites; *Key Places*: Egypt; Mount Athos (Greece)

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Aporoi

The term *aporoi* is used by medieval writers when referring to the Byzantine free tenant farmers and destitute town dwellers. In the Byzantine Empire, the largest number of the people belonged to the lower classes, encompassing the rural peasantry and the urban poor. The term *aporoi* has several related meanings, but its translation from Greek is "without means," which generally describes someone as "lacking sufficient resources." Apart from *aporoi*, there are other words—*penes* and *ptochos*—equally used to designate the poor.

A rural family usually lived on the land it worked, or on small fields and orchards that they either owned completely or leased from others, namely wealthy landowners. The main task of the Byzantine rural family was to produce enough food for themselves as well as to pay regular rent and imposed taxes. The cruel living conditions did not offer many opportunities for surplus production or other types of commercial activities. As a result, most of the peasants were almost eternally tied to the land they worked.

The other subgroup, the city poor, represented the distinctive social phenomenon that relied on official, religious, and private charity. They faced numerous challenges daily. Many city dwellers were looking for odd jobs. Those physically stronger carried heavy loads of dry goods, garbage, and building materials on their backs. Some of

them begged and scavenged on the capital's streets. The poor were the emperor's concern, so he supervised the state's philanthropic activities and operations as well as charity institutions. In late antiquity until the sixth century CE, state bakeries provided free bread to poor residents of the capital. The crisis of the seventh and eight centuries CE and the loss of eastern provinces did not allow this practice to continue. During the Middle Ages, the emperor distributed alms at civic and religious festivals. This act served as an example to all court members or wealthy private citizens. The church itself organized different activities to encourage almsgiving. The church leader cited gospels, and charity was considered as an expression of Christian philanthropy in expectation of the divine judgment. The aid aimed at the poor was delivered through churches and monasteries to hospitals, homes for poor, homeless, and orphanages.

Additionally, the term *aporoi* was used as a fiscal category for those without land or means. According to some sources, rates were imposed by the administration to everyone who was responsible for military service, but every two *aporoi* could make the payment jointly.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Taxes; *Groups and Organizations*: *Dynatoi*; Family; *Mesoi*

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Arians

Arians were supporters of the Christological doctrine Arianism, which maintained that Jesus, as the Son of God, was created by God. It emerged in the early fourth century CE, based on the teaching of the Alexandrian presbyter Arius. The Council of Nicaea in 325 CE proclaimed it a heresy, and it became a considerable controversy that divided the Roman Empire and marked the limits of Christian Orthodoxy.

Arius, founder of the heresy Arianism, believed in the doctrine of Unitarianism that God the Father was unique, having no beginning and no end and nature and attributes that never change. Nicene Christianity, however, taught that God had three

persons united in one nature, remaining unchanged, and all three having no beginning and no end. Arius rejected the doctrine of the Trinity by arguing that the Son had a beginning and, unlike the Father, was subject to change. Therefore, the Son cannot share the uniqueness and unchangeable nature of the Father. Accordingly, the son must be a lesser God, created by the Father out of nothing. As a result, the Father and Son cannot possibly share the same substance.

Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, Arius's most formidable opponent, condemned Arius's teachings that the Son was a lesser God, inferior to the father, and for introducing the doctrine of a plurality of gods, turning Christianity from a monotheistic religion into a polytheistic one. Even worse, in Athanasius's view, Arius implied that the Son could not be the author of mankind's salvation since only he who was fully divine and fully human could serve as the redeemer.

Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) assembled the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE to settle the controversy. It condemned Arius as a heretic, exiled all Arian bishops, and issued a creed to protect Orthodox Christian belief. This doctrine stated that the Son is "of one substance with the Father." Thus, it declared him to be all that the Father is: utterly divine. This decision was only the beginning of a long and complicated Christological (relating to Christ) debate.

From 325 to 337 CE, before Emperor Constantine's death, church leaders who supported Arius and were exiled after the Council of Nicaea could return to their churches and ecclesiastical seats. This gesture was the emperor's attempt to bring peace to the empire. Constantine was more interested in unifying the empire than in theological accuracy.

After Constantine's death, the imperial throne was divided between his three sons, and it often represented a division in religious terms. Constans I (r. 337–350 CE) and Constantine II (r. 337–340 CE), emperors in the West, were sympathetic to non-Arian Christians. Meanwhile, Constantius II (r. 337–361 CE), the emperor in the East, was sympathetic to the Arians. The next church council met at Antioch in 341 CE and issued a clause that affirmed the orthodox faith by omitting the word "homoousian" (the son and the father were equal in divinity). Following this, another council was convoked, this time in Sardica (present-day Sophia) in 343 CE. The younger brother, Constans I, dominant in the western part of the empire, forced his brother to allow the return of exiled bishops.

When in 353 CE Constantius (r. 337–361 CE) emerged as the unchallenged imperial authority of the entire empire, he backed the Arians, an unexpected move that was detrimental to the followers of the Nicaean party. Still, this was not the end of the dispute, and the burning question became the matter or "substance" that made up the Father and the Son. The Arians first divided into two parties. The so-called conservative Arians, or anomoeans, advocated that the Son was not of the same matter as the Father and that he was unlike the Father. They even had some success at the council held in Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia) in 357 CE, where they gained support. Their statements produced a reaction in the form of moderate Arians, semi-Arians or homoousians, who held that the Son shared a substance similar to the Father. From the beginning of the controversy, Emperor Constantius threw his

support to the semi-Arians, but later turned to the newly emerging third group of Arians, homoenas, whose leader was Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople. They considered that the Son was "like" the Father. They attempted to win support at the council held in Constantinople in 360 CE. This reunion of church officials decided to reject all previous creeds and not to allow the use of the term "substance." More important, they issued a statement of faith that declared that the Son was identical to the Father who created him.

The non-Arian Christian majority in the West recovered its position after Constantius's death in 361 CE. The persecution of non-Arians directed by the Arian Emperor Valens (r. 364–378 CE) in the East on one side, and the triumph of the teaching of Basil the Great of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen on the other, cleared the path for the homoousian majority in the East to reach an agreement with the Nicene party. When Emperors Gratian (r. 367–383 CE) and Theodosius (r. 379–395 CE) became engaged in the defense of non-Arian theology, their actions condemned Arianism to failure. In 381 CE, the Second Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople, banned Arianism and acclaimed the Nicene Creed as a statement of faith.

However, this did not end Arianism in the empire. The non-Nicene creed persisted among contingents of the Roman army with non-Roman backgrounds (Germans, for the most part, converted by an Arian bishop, Ulfilas). In a military context, Arianism remained the prevailing religion during the late fourth and early fifth centuries CE, and many could have Arian church services conducted by Arian clergy.

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See also: *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; Basil of Caesarea; Constantine the Great; Gregory of Nazianzus; *Key Events*: Nicaea, Council of; Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople

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Avars

The Avars were a nomadic Turkic-speaking people whose westward migration brought them into the plains of Pannonia in central Europe (modern-day Hungary) and into conflict with the Byzantine Empire in the Balkans in the later sixth century CE. The

Avars remained a relevant political entity, although of declining strength, into the late eighth century CE.

Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) utilized diplomacy and Byzantine wealth to set various tribal groups against one another along the empire's Danube frontier. His successor, Emperor Justin II (r. 565–574 CE), however, reversed several of Justinian's sound policies, including the tribute to the Avars. This reversal prompted Avar aggression against the neighboring Gepids, a Germanic group previously allied with the empire. The Avars allied with another Germanic group, the Lombards, who were also hostile to Byzantium, and eliminated the Gepids, undermining a pillar of Byzantine diplomacy in the region. The success of the Avars removed a regional rival and granted them the freedom to direct their energy against Byzantium. Avar power was bolstered by their control over many small, nonnomadic Slavic groups who had already migrated into the region. In 582 CE, the Avars conquered the Byzantine border city of Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia), a critical defensive center in the northern Balkans. Removing this Byzantine fortification opened access for raids into the Balkans and increased Slavic settlement into the region, as many Slavs were fleeing Avar control.

As Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE) began his reign, the former general assessed the security of the empire, which was short of cash and facing imminent threats on three frontiers: in Italy with the Lombards, in the Balkans with the Avars and Slavs, and in the East with Sassanid Persia. The emperor determined that the Persian threat was the most dangerous and focused his defensive efforts there. Meanwhile, he tried to buy the support of the Franks against the Lombards in Italy and relied on subsidies to the Avars to keep them north of the Danube, but this was not effective. With the Byzantine army concentrated on Persia, the Avars turned predatory and ravaged the northern Balkans, while Slavs began migrating into the eastern Balkans. Maurice again granted tribute to the Avars and tolerated their hold on territory south of the Danube because his army was still occupied against Persia, while Slavic settlement gained further ground.

With a peace secured on the Persian frontier in 591 CE, Maurice attended to the Balkan situation over the next decade. The frontier seemed secure by 599 CE, when he campaigned against Avar power, but the double bane of plague and financial problems took their toll and a severe food shortage occurred in the capital, unleashing fierce rioting. Because of this shortage and the negative impact of his fiscal policies, the emperor was becoming increasingly unpopular.

In the summer of 602 CE, a Byzantine army mobilized under the leadership of the emperor's brother Peter, but when the campaign season ended, the emperor ordered, as a cost-saving measure, the soldiers to winter on enemy territory north of the Danube. The army, facing the prospects of a cold winter in hostile territory and with uncertain provisions, mutinied. The soldiers wanted the orders rescinded, but Peter stood by his brother's decision, and, by doing so, completely lost control.

Once the army had rejected its senior leadership, it found a new commander in a junior officer named Phocas. The Byzantine army now marched against Constantinople.

Phocas (r. 602–610 CE) entered the city on November 25, 602 CE, was proclaimed emperor, and executed Maurice and his family. Sassanid Persian Shah Khusro II used these events to justify breaking the peace settlement and renewing hostility with the empire, ostensibly in defense of the fallen emperor's family. To withstand this invasion, Phocas shifted all available troops to the east, including those in the Balkans, but this failed to check the Persian advance, and Phocas's support plummeted in the capital. In North Africa, which supplied grain to Constantinople, Heraclius, the exarch of Carthage, who was too distant to be deterred by Phocas's threats, rebelled. The exarch's son, also named Heraclius, set sail from North Africa and secured control in Constantinople in 610 CE. Phocas was arrested and executed, leaving Heraclius with an empire on the brink of collapse.

Both the Persians and the Avars took advantage of the situation. The Avars completely dominated the Balkans and even attempted to ambush the emperor outside Constantinople. With no troops to spare for the Balkans, the emperor renewed tribute payments to the Avars so that he could continue the Persian campaign. Peace with the Avars was always precarious, and in 626 CE, they collaborated with the Persians for a joint assault on the capital. This attack proved futile, since the Avars were unable to overcome the city's massive walls, while the Byzantine navy easily defeated the Slavic fleet, preventing the transfer of Persian forces gathered on the city's Asian side to the Avar force on the European side. Infuriated by the failure of his Slavic navy, the Avar khan massacred the Slavic survivors. This defeat weakened Avar prestige, and subject peoples began to revolt soon after that. Slavic Croats successfully broke from Avar power in the Western Balkans, and Czechs did the same in central Europe. In the Balkans, the Avars were soon replaced by another Turkic people, the Bulgars, who revolted against Avar dominance and moved into the Balkans by the 670s CE.

The Avars withdrew from the Balkans, with the center of Avar power remaining on the plains of Pannonia (modern Hungary), from where they were challenged by other Turkic powers (Bulgars and Khazars) to the east and, from the west, by the expansion of the Germanic Franks in the eighth century. The Christian Franks viewed the pagan Avars with great hostility, with religion used as justification for the need to conquer this dangerous foe. In military campaigns at the end of the eighth and early ninth centuries CE, Charlemagne, king of the Franks (r. 768–814 CE), soundly defeated the Avars, who were engulfed in a civil war at the time. This defeat, which greatly enriched the Frankish treasury at Aachen, marked the end of the Avar tribal confederation.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Individuals*: Heraclius; Maurice; *Groups and Organizations*: Franks; Slavs

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Bulgars

The Bulgars were nomadic people originally from central Asia, and their first kingdom was located north of the Black Sea. After their settlement in the early seventh century CE in the area along the Danube River, they played an important role as a defense line for the Byzantine Empire during a period of 50 years. In the centuries to come, they established a state in this region, and their history remained closely connected with Byzantine history.

Kovrat, an Onogur Bulgar ruler, assumed power between 620 and 630 CE. He successfully led a rebellion against the Avars and drove them from the north Caucasus. After overthrowing them, he established relations with Constantinople and sent an embassy to the Byzantine capital. Kovrat created an alliance with the Byzantines, mainly due to his family relations with Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), but this collaboration ended shortly after his death, in 642 CE. Almost at the same time, the Bulgar state suffered strong pressure from the Khazars, and after a while the Bulgar Union known as Old Great Bulgaria broke up.

While the Khazars subjugated some of the Bulgars, Khan Asparukh, son of Kovrat, led one branch of the Bulgars toward the west so they reached the Danube around 670 CE. The Byzantines opposed their crossing the river and settling on the other side, which caused conflict. In 680 CE, Bulgarians under Asparukh severely defeated the Byzantine forces at Ongala and continued advancing. The imperial forces were not capable of stopping them, so they settled north of the Danube delta, and in 681 CE Emperor Constantine IV (r. 668–685 CE) agreed to a peace treaty and accepted annual tribute from the Bulgars. The Byzantine emperor was forced to acknowledge an independent state on imperial land.

Asparukh's kingdom covered territory on both sides of the Danube, including Dobruja, Bessarabia, Lower Moesia, and part of the Wallachian plains. Lower Moesia was a central part of the state, and the capital, Pliska, was established here. The Bulgars were organized in a clan system ruled by a khan (Turkic monarchical title) and by a military aristocracy. Asparukh himself was a member of the most prominent clan, Dulo.

Bulgars settled in the southeastern part of the Balkan peninsula, on the territory that first belonged to the Roman and then to Byzantine Empire. Initially, Slavs had inhabited this area in the sixth century. Later Bulgars expelled and relocated them to the border regions. Slavs became significant citizens of the Bulgar state and assimilated with them, so they created Bulgaria as a Slavic, not Turkic, state.

This 11th-century image shows the Bulgars, led by Tsar Peter II Delyan (Deleanos), besieging the Byzantine city of Thessaloniki in 1040. The Bulgars, a Turkic group first mentioned in the fifth century CE, formed an empire in the Balkans and were then conquered by the Byzantines during the reign of Basil II. The siege of Thessaloniki occurred during a Bulgar revolt. (Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

The First Bulgarian Empire was founded by Khan Asparukh, who defeated both the Slavs and the Byzantines. Asparukh and his son Tervel (r. 700–721 CE) played an important role in the consolidation of the Bulgar states. When in 716 CE a boundary between the two empires was established, it was followed by a period of cultural and economic growth. Bulgars even assisted the Byzantines in their battles to prevent the expansion of Arabs. Tervel's death caused a period of tensions and conflicts, and the Dulo clan was overthrown in 761 CE. There was no single clan to successfully control all clans and to confront the Byzantine attacks. The political situation changed when Khan Krum came to power (r. 803–814 CE) and managed not only to defeat the Byzantines but to kill Emperor Nicephorus I (r. 802–811 CE). Krum died in 813 CE during his preparations to invade Constantinople.

The Bulgars, at the beginning, opposed Christianity and were one of a few European nations to retain their traditional religion. Moreover, they treated the Christians under their control very harshly. Khan Omurtag (r. 814–831 CE), for example, persecuted and killed Christians, including Bulgarian converts, and his successor, son Khan Malamir (r. 831–836 CE), even executed his own brother for refusing to give up Christianity. Next in the ruling line, Khan Presian I assisted the Byzantines to suppress Slav revolts. Presian's son, Boris I, succeeded him on the throne around 865–866 CE, and he was baptized as a Christian under the sponsorship of the Byzantine Empire. This is when conversion of the Bulgar people to Christianity officially started. The short reign of Vladimir (r. 889–893 CE) represented a brief return to traditional religion, but as soon as Boris's son Simeon I (r. 893–927 CE) was proclaimed czar, Christianity became the Bulgars' official religion. Despite his strong ties with the Byzantine Empire and his Byzantine education, Simeon expanded territory of the empire by acquiring Byzantine lands. The rule of his son Peter (r. 927–969 CE) was marked by great economic, cultural, and religious growth.

BOGOMILISM

Bogomilism was a heresy that emerged in the Bulgarian state in the 10th century, during the reign of Czar Peter (927–969 CE), when severe crisis was especially reflected in the social sphere and in the increasing domination of the church. The church favored monasticism, but heresies and antichurch sects flourished parallelly and became attractive for unsatisfied masses of the population. As a doctrine, Bogomilism was contrary to the dogma of the official church. Its founder was Father Bogomil, who spread the teaching about two opposed concepts, good and evil, or God and devil, ruling the world and how their mutual conflict conditioned one`s life and everything happening in the world. The entire visible world was the creation of the devil and subject to him. Like their Eastern predecessors, Bogomils sought spiritual perfection based on a strictly ascetic life. They rejected the rituals and organization of the Christian church. By rejecting the ruling church, they rose against the world order and especially against the rich and powerful. Bogomilism became especially popular in Bulgaria and Macedonia, as well as outside the Bulgarian state, and started spreading in Byzantium, Serbia, and Italy. The massive movement affected states from Armenia to southern France and had its peak in the time of crises and hardships.

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This empire lasted until 972 CE, when Bulgars fell under the control of the Byzantine Empire, during the rule of Boris II, the Bulgarian khan. By 1018, all territory of Bulgaria was incorporated into the Byzantine Empire, but complete assimilation did not occur although a certain level of cultural exchange was present. The Bulgar aristocracy found its place within the Byzantine ruling class, and Bogomilism, a kind of Bulgarian heresy, was accepted. On the other side, high taxation policies were imposed by the Byzantines, so it all motivated Bulgarians to rebel and try to regain their independence in 1187.

The Second Bulgarian Empire was founded by Ivan Assen and his brother, Peter. The siblings of Kuman origin firstly served the Byzantine Empire. They initiated revolt in northern Bulgaria in 1185. By 1187 their mission was completed, and Ivan was crowned czar. The Bulgarian state, as well as the whole region, was disturbed by the Fourth Crusade, and Bulgarians seized this opportunity to occupy Macedonia. The peak of Bulgarian development and influence was marked by the marriage of John Assen's daughter and Theodore II Lascaris (r. 1254–1258), Byzantine emperor of Nicaea. Unfortunately, this period did not last long, and in the following phase the Bulgarian state faced serious economic and political problems. Threats of Tatars and Ottomans provoked internal dissent, and in 1373, Bulgaria came under the control of Ottomans. After defeats at the Battle of Kosovo and the Battle of Nicopolis, in 1389 and 1396, respectively, the Bulgarian Empire fell to the Ottoman Turks under the leadership of Sultan Murad I (r. 1362–1389), who unfortunately did not survive the Battle of Kosovo to celebrate his great victory.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Taxes; *Individuals*: Heraclius; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Khazars; Muslims; Slavs; *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; *Key Places*: Bulgaria

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Cenobites

Cenobites are the members of the Christian religion that lived in a specific type of communal, monastic organization. Ever since the beginning of Christianity, Christ himself called upon Christians to live an ethical and moral life. Since the time of the second century CE, when Christians suffered severe persecutions at the hands of the Roman authorities and perceived the evil state of the world as an impediment to their salvation, some, both men and women, decided to follow the teachings of Christ and the apostles and establish standards of simple Christian life. These followers of Christ believed that they had to live lives of spiritual perfection, so they isolated themselves from the world to practice humility, obedience, chastity, celibacy, poverty, prayer, and fasting to ensure their entrance into the kingdom of God.

Starting in the third century CE, they began escaping the pleasures and evils of this world by living a reclusive life in the desert, where they dedicated themselves entirely to God and attempted to achieve spiritual perfection. While some of these individuals lived by themselves, others founded permanent communities in the desert comprising small groups of like-minded people. These religious recluses soon became known by various names, such as anchorites, hermits, or monastics, all terms derived from Greek words connoting "departure," "desert," or "being alone." A "monastic," for instance, became known as one who dwells in the "the presence of God alone." The anchorites were founded by Saint Anthony the Great, and they followed his monastic ideals. At the same time, another type of monastic organization appeared that favored communal, cenobitic life (from *koinos bios*: communal living), organized under strict rules known as Pachomian *Koinonia*. The founders of the cenobitic life were the monk Saint Pachomius of Egypt (290–346 CE) and his disciples Theodore and Horsiesios. They were supposed to live following the rules of God and imitating Christ by their obedience and humility. Each monastery consisted of 30 to 40 houses of brothers who lived under the control of their abbot (*abbas*: father). They fought for salvation mostly through prayers and manual work and became known as athletes or soldiers of Christ. They often lived in houses

according to the craft or work they performed: shoemakers, tailors, carriage makers. In the beginning, monks were not clerics but simply laymen and women who sought a closer relationship with God by physically separating themselves from human society. Nothing more was needed beyond the personal decision to make such a separation. There were, at the time, no required vows, ceremonies, or rituals, and anyone who chose to live as a monk was not permitted to become a member of the clergy. Starting in Egypt, organized monasticism soon spread across the Christian Middle East during the third through sixth centuries CE, establishing itself in the Sinai Peninsula and across Syria and Palestine.

Because monasticism quickly became a strong movement within Christianity, the institutional church sought to shape it by condemning anti-church groups or tendencies that arose within monasticism. The church merged the regular clergy (i.e., the monks) and secular clergy and established control over the former by instituting a specialized religious ceremony that represented the taking of monastic vows. This ceremony converted them into a particular class of Christians whose position was between the clergy and the laypeople. The person most responsible for the development of monasticism in this direction was Saint Basil (329–379 CE), archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

In this 14th-century choirbook, Saint Benedict of Nursia presents the Benedictine Rule for the members of his monastic communities. Benedict wrote the rule in the middle of the sixth century. It regulated behavior and organization necessary for spiritual salvation and was the most important monastic rule in the early middle ages. (Art Institute of Chicago)

Saint Basil is significant for his works dedicated to regulating monastic life: the "Great Rules" and the "Brief Rules." These works instituted rules that guided the flow of daily life in cenobitic monasteries, and they were instrumental in establishing in Christian thought the notion that monastic life was the ideal Christian life. Precisely this type of Pachomian cenobitic life, supported by Saint Basil, was the type of monastic life accepted by the Christian West. The rules of Pachomius and Basil were introduced to the West through the fourth-century Latin translations of Saint Jerome and Rufinus of Aquileia, respectively. In the sixth century CE, Saint Benedict, who established various

METEORA

Meteora are a group of monasteries in northern Greece, in a region of almost inaccessible sandstone peaks. In the ninth century CE, an ascetic group of hermit monks moved up to the ancient heights, becoming the first people to inhabit Meteora. They lived in hollows and cracks in the rock towers, some as high as 1,800 feet (550m) above the plain. This great height, combined with the sheerness of the cliff walls, provided an ideal place for secluded life. Initially, the hermits led a life of solitude, meeting only on Sundays and religious holidays to worship and pray in a chapel built at the foot of a rock. The exact date of the establishment of the monasteries is unknown. By the late 11th and early 12th centuries, a first monastic state had formed, and it was centered on the Church of Theotokos (Mother of God). In the next century, an ascetic community gathered in Meteora. The monks sought somewhere to hide from a growing number of Turkish attacks on Greece. Twenty-four of these monasteries were built, despite incredible difficulties, at the time of the great revival of the eremetic ideal in the 15th century. Meteora is, along with Mount Athos, Mount Sinai, Mount Auxentios, and Mount Olympus in Bithynia, one of the most celebrated monastic sites and cenobitic communities.

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monastic communities in Italy, revised the Basilian Rules, creating the most influential and widely accepted rule of monasticism in the Western church. Known as Benedictines, the monastic followers of the Rule of Saint Benedict soon spread across Western Europe. According to Saint Basil and Saint Benedict, the followers of their rules were to seek perfection in their lives as Christians by daily practicing all the Christian virtues. Monks were to be humble and loving in their interactions with each other and obedient to the head of their monastery, who was their spiritual father and Christ's representative in the monastery. Monks were to be chaste and eschew all private property, holding all things in common within the monastery. After achieving Christian perfection themselves, monks were to be permitted to return to the world, where they could assist others to do the same. Monks in effect acted as social workers, running schools, orphanages, and hospitals and providing food to the poor. This was how Saint Basil and other early monastic leaders fit monasticism in the church's earthly mission. The monastery was a place for salvation, and since people were not self-sufficient. they had to rely on mutual help, support, and understanding. Thus, the communal life was more appropriate than any other one.

Influenced by the work of Saint Basil's practices, the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) laid the foundation for monastic organization and placed monks under the authority of their diocesan bishop. Only this bishop could authorize the new monastic foundations in his diocese. In the Orthodox Church, this decision prevented the development of monastic orders, which became quite common in the Western church during the medieval period.

Monasticism spread in the West when many monks came there from the Middle East, including Saint Athanasius of Alexandria, who went into exile in Europe in 399 CE; Evagrius of Antioch, who translated Athanasius's "Life of Saint Anthony" into

Latin in about 380 CE; and the Latin monks Rufinus and Saint Jerome, who carried monasticism to Europe in the late fourth century CE after living in Palestine. Monasticism was brought to northern Italy by Saint Ambrose of Milan (d. 395 CE) and to northern Africa by Saint Augustine (d. 430 CE). Saint Honoratus of Arles introduced cenobitic monasticism into southern France (Gaul) in 415 CE, while Saint Martin of Tours (370 CE) established monasticism in France. Bishop Castor of Apt in Gaul requested Saint John Cassian to establish two monasteries near Marseilles in 415 CE. Cassian had experienced monasticism in Egypt and returned to Gaul to establish monasticism there regulated by his monastic writings, the *Institutes* (a guide for regulating the life of monks) and the *Conferences* (containing the spiritual wisdom of Egyptian anchoretic holy men).

Monasticism in this form is still present within the Eastern Orthodox Church, and many monasteries continue living their cenobitic life throughout territories that once belonged to the Byzantine Empire: Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, and Egypt.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; Law; *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; Chrysostom, John; Rufinus; *Groups and Organizations*: Anchorites; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; *Key Places*: Bulgaria; Egypt

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Collegia

Collegia were free private associations that existed in ancient Rome starting from the Republican period and comprised groups of individuals of similar interest. Their members were free men or slaves who practiced a common trade or worshipped a common god. One or more *collegia* existed in nearly every city, to which they were bound, and their members lived in the same urban area. They formed for mutual aid and protection, and for the advocacy of their professional interests. All *collegia*, whether professional or religious, were organized in the same way, as the city itself. Each association had a council, magistrate who held the office for a year, and benefactors, who were usually honored by honorary edicts.

The *collegia* probably emerged in the later years of the Roman Republic. Some scholars point out that the main reason for their existence was the possibility for each member to lead a proper social life, and above all to have a decent burial. Over time they became the center of plebian private life, and even the government feared these gatherings, which lacked a clearly defined purpose.

The development of the *collegia* or guilds of craftsmen and tradesmen could be traced easily in comparison with other types. In the first and second centuries, these were relatively loose organizations and lack of intervention of the central government was characteristic of the economic system. The members of *collegia* were the traders and producers from large cities—for example, shippers who conveyed the corn supplies from Africa and Egypt, or bakers who made the bread. In most cases, the trades organized in corporations were hereditary, since the son would probably follow his father's vocation as the most profitable way to earn a living.

In the following centuries, numerous economic difficulties obliged the central administration to attempt to find solutions. In the first instance, the *collegia* were forced to operate their own business and simultaneously undertake the state's activities. Thus, skippers transported not only public food supplies but *annona* (taxes comprising agricultural produce, usually intended to supplement the pay of soldiers) as well, being at the same time responsible for safe arrival of the cargo. This was too heavy a burden for the majority of *collegia* members, and most attempted to escape from it.

Emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) intended to solve the economic problem of the time by fixing people to their jobs so they could not avoid paying taxes. At the same time, he enabled *collegia* members to perform public functions with minimum reward. All this led the *collegia* to be included into the state apparatus. From the reign of Diocletian onward, the imperial government deliberately exploited these guilds in the interests of public authority and social order. Constantine's (r. 306–337 CE) legislation in many instances extended their responsibilities and duties, or even made them hereditary, thus creating hereditary state guilds. These new measures worsened their position significantly: they were sanctioned by the central government and they were subject to the authority of the magistrates.

By restricting the membership of the guilds to a hereditary caste of skilled artisans, and by increasing financial demands upon them, the government drastically reduced the number of guilds. By the fourth century, during the days of the Roman Empire's decline, the position of the guilds became unstable and their survival uncertain. After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, guilds disappeared in Western Europe and did not reappear until more than six centuries later. Nevertheless, the *collegia* did survive in the Byzantine Empire, particularly in the city of Constantinople. They not only continued to exist but grew in strength.

Some scholars consider it indisputable that even in late antiquity, the Roman professional associations never regulated and controlled working conditions, apprenticeships, salaries, and prices, and never intervened in quality control. Moreover, they never agreed between themselves on market sharing. Roman *collegia* fulfilled their public service obligation, while being subject neither to state control nor to requests for production. Moreover, the members of *collegia* were initially brought together by their profession, but meetings and shared experiences solidified their friendship as well.

During the period of the seventh and eighth centuries, decline in the Byzantine Empire left scarce information regarding *collegia*. A detailed description of guild organization is found in the *Book of the Eparch* (prefect), a well-known manual of government likely compiled by Byzantine Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE) in about 900

CE. As described, the main function of guilds was to impose strict controls on every trade and craft in Constantinople, especially for financial purposes and for the raising of taxes.

Although some historians argue the medieval Europe guilds arose from the Byzantine *collegia*, no direct connections between these two different institutions have ever been established, and the origins of medieval guilds are likely the result of changes in the economies of Western and northern Europe that followed the end of the Dark Ages.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: *Annona*; Guilds; Law; Taxes; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; *Groups and Organizations*: Professional Associations

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Coloni

Coloni is a term applied to describe most peasants who represented the strongest productive force in agriculture of the late Roman Empire and in the early Byzantine period. In the east, throughout the Byzantine Empire they existed from the fourth to the sixth century. The process during which they lost their independence was finished by the end of the fourth century in almost all provinces of the empire.

In the late antiquity, a *colonus* was a hereditary tenant farmer whose position and status almost did not differ from that of a slave. Although free and possessing certain rights, *coloni* were eternally limited by the land they belonged to. They could not be ejected from the land, their freedom to marry was restricted, and they were not allowed to join the army.

Unstable conditions in the second half of the third century originated movement of certain groups of small landowners and their conversion into *coloni*. Many free peasants transferred ownership of their lands to wealthy landowners in exchange for their physical protection (*patrocinium*) and payment of their taxes. Through collaboration of the state and the wealthy, this process was converted into a formal one, and *coloni* were legally transformed into a chattel tied to the land. Therefore, *coloni* became a stable base of agricultural work although conditions varied from province to province. Another reason for them to be bound to the soil was to secure fiscal revenues.

This force is usually divided into two broad categories: the *coloni liberi* and the *coloni censibus adscripticii* (registered landless cultivators). Initially, free worker-farmers were called *coloni* (from the Latin verb *colere*, to cultivate). Tenants were later

included in this term. According to a law of Anastasios I (r. 491–518 CE), if a lease of land by a free farmer exceeded 30 years, then the contract could not be terminated, and the free worker would become the owner of the property. From that point onward, the landlord could not discharge the *colonus*, and neither could the *colonus* leave the land. To a certain point, a *colonus* was considered free and he had an exceptional opportunity to withdraw from this forced situation: he could acquire enough land to allow him to work full-time on it. He could then abandon the leased land to devote his time to his own property.

Coloni *censibus adscripticii* had a different status: they were listed among a landlord's assets just like slaves. They differed from the latter in that they were considered slaves not of the landlord but of the land they cultivated. This meant that they were legally free: they were entitled to marry and to place a lawsuit against the landlord if he breached the contract or asked for an increase in the amount of leased land. Notwithstanding, they could under no circumstances leave the land on which they worked, and they were not entitled to have their own personal property.

In the sixth century, Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) introduced changes in legislation that improved the status of the *coloni censibus adscripticii*. Thus, only if they gained their landlord's approval, and if they paid the corresponding tax, were farmers able to earn the right to have their own land and property. In this way, the *coloni* and *coloni censibus adscripticii* as such had already begun to disappear by the mid-sixth century. They were gradually assimilated into the class of free small landowners. Accordingly, the terms *colonus* and *colonus censibus adscripticii* do not appear after the sixth century and they were replaced by *paroikoi* (dependent peasants). In the middle Byzantine period, *paroikia* steadily replaced all other forms of land leasing.

According to some historians, differences existed between *paroikia* and *coloni*: *coloni* were bound to the soil by the law and their land was property of the landowner. Also, the state reason for tying *coloni* to the soil was to secure the fiscal revenue, which was not the case with *paroikia*. In the following centuries, Arab and Persian invasion in the Middle East as well as movement of Slavs and Avars on the Balkan Peninsula almost destroyed wealthy landlords and left their property ruined. Consequently, free peasants appeared and started cultivating these lands.

Due to social, political, and military changes of the time, *coloni* disappeared in the Byzantine Empire by the end of the seventh century, but they continued to exist in the West as serfs in the Middle Ages.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Slavery; *Individuals*: Anastasius, Flavius; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Events*: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*

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Curiales

In Ancient Rome, the *curiales* initially represented the most important members of a clan. Each clan included several gens composed of leading families claiming descent from a common ancestor and exercising certain roles in the city, both civil and religious. The leader of each gens was called a *curio*. A *curio maximus* presided over the entire assembly composed of clans and gens.

Under the empire, these civic structures sprang up in the towns and cities of all Roman provinces. By the fourth century CE, the term "*curiales*" described local merchants and landowners, who sat on the *curia* (city council) and served as civic magistrates and *decurions* (members of the city's senate). *Curiales* supplied money to fund civic projects, such as the construction of temples, baths, fortification walls, games to celebrate religious holidays, and local welfare programs. They were also responsible for supplying living quarters and food for the emperors and their entourage whenever they visited the city, which could be a heavy burden on the city's resources. *Curiales* were often expected to use their wealth to pay for these expenses, increasing their prestige by such generosity.

Byzantine local organization and administration evolved from the Roman tradition, which in turn was based on the principles of Hellenistic cities. The responsibility for the stable operation of the early Byzantine city belonged to the *bouleuterion* (*curia* in Latin), whose members were called *bouleutai* or *curiales*. They usually came from the *ordo equester*, the equestrian class, appointed or elected based on an honorary system.

The body of *curiales* in the late fourth century formed a closed, hereditary social group. Those who satisfied the three conditions set by Constantine the Great (306–337 CE) in 317 were obliged to become members: *origo, incolatus*, and *condicio possidendi* (origin, permanent residence, and landed property). Thus, a second social class formed below the senatorial order. This second social classification was a kind of provincial aristocracy of large, medium and, less frequently in small cities, small landowners, whose highest ranks merged with the lower levels of rural senators.

Curiales assumed many public responsibilities, and this became increasingly obligatory when Constantine took local taxes, rents, and dues for the use of the imperial government. They controlled the city's food supplies and maintained the walls and aqueducts; they ensured the smooth running of the baths, including the heating system, and oversaw the city's lighting and night watches; they organized races, celebrations, and games, and selected and oversaw the payment of doctors and teachers, and so on. Their number was not precisely specified; it depended on the economic force of the city. It might vary from city to city, or from one period to another. Contemporary sources state that Antioch had 60 *curiales* at one time, 600 earlier on, and 1,200 before that. Those who were legally relieved of the obligations of *curiales*, such as bishops, orators, doctors, and others charged with public functions (for example *navicularii*, who were responsible for the transportation of wheat), enjoyed the same social status as *curiales*.

Emperor Julian (r. 361–363 CE) returned the cities' revenues and tried to increase the size of curial councils to lessen the costs of serving on each individual councilor, but Julian died before his policy could be implemented. Emperors Valentinian I

SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The Byzantine Empire created specific legislation that formed a closed society with fixed social groups, within a broad social hierarchy: the *honestiores* who occupied the top-position privileged class and the *humiliores*, a class of farmers and urban dwellers who stood in the lower part of it. As a result, social mobility was limited but still not completely forbidden or absent. By entering public service, the church administration, or military forces, one could advance despite the restrictive measures. The great number of laws that controlled moves were not always regularly applied. Wealthy professionals such as merchants, ship owners, and fishers sometimes succeeded in their attempts in becoming members of the city council (curia, or *bouleuterion*) or lower provincial departments. Also, there were examples when *curiales* managed to enter the senatorial class. Obviously, so-called social mobility was achievable, but it was limited to high social classes. Contrary to this, the lower classes, whether urban or rural, had no chance to avoid the social and economic conditions they lived and worked in and to climb up the social scale. Very often this led to tensions and confrontations and caused the lower classes to rise against the economic pressures imposed by the upper, ruling class.

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(363–375 CE) and Valens (364–378 CE) again seized civic revenues, although one-third of this sum was restored to the cities through local payments by Crown Estates and city funds eventually became separate budget items. Eventually, the Roman government returned management of civic funds to local administrations, but, in the fourth century CE, the *curiales* were in an awkward position of carrying out the *sordida munera* (public duties and responsibilities) without help from the imperial government. To make matters worse, the *curiales* were also expected to collect imperial taxes and to pay them from their own pockets when citizens were unable or unwilling to do so. They were also required to provide food and supplies for the army and to fund the imperial postal system (*cursus publicus*), the costs of which were met by provincial landowners.

During the fourth and fifth centuries CE, the costs of membership in the curial class were beyond the means of all but the richest individuals. To avoid this burden, particularly in the West, individuals purchased exemptions from curial service, especially after 400 CE, which was the beginning of a 200-year period during which the provincial standard of living was cut in half by a series of Germanic invasions. Many *curiales* sought to escape the financial burdens of their office by enlisting in the army, taking imperial or ecclesiastical positions, or by achieving senatorial rank, since senators were exempted from curial service. To avoid this, emperors repeatedly passed legislation forcing them to return to the councils but to no avail.

As a result, the councils ceased to function, and their prior obligations more and more fell into the hands of the local bishop (formerly senators or imperial officials) who would be responsible not only for church affairs but also for the administration of the city.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: *Cursus Publicus*; Senate; *Organization and Administration*: Law; Municipal Administration; Taxes; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Julian the Apostate; *Key Places*: Antioch

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Demes

By the Byzantine era, the term "deme" (*demos*) referred to one of several groups of chariot racers who claimed the allegiance of various factions in the city of Constantinople. The demes acquired great power between the fifth and seventh centuries and were very often in conflict with the Byzantine emperors and among each other.

The most popular sports in Rome were gladiator fights and chariot races, almost equally deadly, and they offered to the extensive population entertainment in the form of bloodshed. The chariot races were held in Rome's Circus Maximus, where 12 teams of four horses ran seven laps about the area. The rules were very few and injuries due to collisions very frequent. Such risks were acceptable to the charioteers, who were usually slaves, because they could win freedom and rich financial awards; those who won races and avoided death could became extremely rich. Spectators were also able to bet on their favorite performers and earn substantial sums, which made them capable of using dirty tricks to disable their rivals.

Under the Roman Republic, four chariot racing teams competed, with each identified by a particular color—the Reds, Whites, the Greens, and the Blues—and with each boasting an enthusiastic group of supporters. After the fall of the Western Empire in the sixth century CE, only two teams survived in Constantinople—the Greens, who had absorbed the Reds, and the Blues, who had absorbed the Whites. The Blues and Greens still attracted wide acclaim in the Byzantine Empire, especially in its capital, Constantinople, as well as in other cities such as Alexandria in Egypt, or Antioch in Syria. Bloody fights and riots frequently erupted between the equally passionate supporters of each group.

Furthermore, demes became an institutional element whose participation in public life was indispensable. Since one or the other group often backed the imperial government, it was often obliged to take them into account. Usually, the one faction enjoyed the support of the supreme authority, while the other fell into disgrace. Nevertheless, there were also cases when the demes were united in common upheaval against the imperial power, resisting its absolutism and opposing its centralization measures.

The Hippodrome was the only place in Constantinople where many people could gather and the emperor could address subjects or they him. The Hippodrome was

located directly adjacent to the emperor's imperial palace, thus illustrating its importance to the capital. Byzantine emperors could access their private box in the arena via a private passageway from the palace.

It is unclear whether the Blues and Greens represented more than just teams of chariot racers. Some modern scholars believe that the two groups also had political and religious aspects. The Blues may have represented the governing class and may have stood for orthodox religion, while the Greens may have represented the lower classes and may have advocated Monophysitism, a popular but controversial doctrine that denied the orthodox belief that Christ combined within himself both a human and a divine nature, but instead had only a single nature.

Regarding organization, each deme had its own elected leadership, a staff of servants, chariot drivers, entertainers, and houses, horses, and financial resources collected from their supporters. Demarchs appointed by the imperial government oversaw demes. The factions had a dual function—in the time of peace they participated in the public works, and in the time of emergency they acted as a civil guard. The civil guard was the core of the demes.

Over many centuries, demes were responsible for disturbances in the capital and throughout the empire. During the reign of Anastasius I (r. 491–518 CE), public buildings were burned and statues of the emperor destroyed when the crowd disapproved of his policies. Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE), with his authoritarian rule, insisted on restricting their activities. The emperor's policy toward demes was somewhat unstable, and the new taxation system became unbearable for some social classes. All of this led to the Nika Revolt in 527 CE, which represented the climax of the power of demes. In the following decades, they were slightly marginalized. During the reign of Phocas (r. 602–610 CE), the demes participated in conflicts that almost turned into a civil war. From 696 to 717 CE, when seven different rulers occupied the imperial throne, the role of demes was to appoint emperors along with the Senate.

Eventually the opinion of the demes and their role in Byzantine society changed. Some scholars believe that during this period the games generated more enthusiasm and loyalty than political groupings and the Blues and Greens needed no attachment to political issues to generate violence. In 501 CE, for example, the Greens murdered some 3,000 Blues after ambushing them in the Hippodrome in Constantinople. In 505 CE, Porphyrius, a former Blue charioteer now racing for the Greens, caused riots in Antioch when he won a race.

The Nika Revolt stripped the demes of their great support and influence and led to a decline in the popularity of chariot racing. The races thereafter evolved into an aspect of court ritual until their ultimate decline in the 12th century.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Senate; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; Phocas; *Groups and Organizations*: Monophysites; Political Parties; *Venationes*; *Key Events*: Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Dynatoi

Dynatoi is a term used to refer to the dominant upper class of Byzantine society. Scholars have debated the real meaning of the term "*dynatoi*." Some historians consider large-scale landlords, or feudal magnates, as *dynatoi*, while others estimate the principle that defines membership in the *dynatoi* was not the ownership of property (land) but rather possession of spiritual or secular authority. Therefore, they could be considered both "wealthy" and "powerful," the former usually opposed to the "poor."

The word itself appears mainly from the 10th century CE. In legislation and as an economic concept, the term is usually explained to clarify the composition of this group. The land legislation uses the term to designate power. Therefore, wealth was not the only distinguishing characteristic of the *dynatoi*. The dynatoi held the highest military, administrative, and ecclesiastical offices in the state; their elite status was thus defined by position and authority. They constituted the ecclesiastical and lay aristocracy of the empire; they were born to and educated for the high positions they held in the military and church hierarchies and in the Senate and other high governmental offices.

The ecclesiastical aristocracy, in a very comprehensive sense, constituted the Orthodox Church. This group comprised all the higher clergy of the church—the patriarch, metropolitans, and archbishops, as well as many priests and the heads of the monasteries. The heads of monastic houses exercised great power and authority in this period because the monasteries owned vast tracks of land and because they were independent of their local bishop or lay lord, being under the direct protection of the emperor.

The lay aristocracy is more difficult to characterize. The group was defined by its ability to access political power and wealth, both of which derived from the emperor and the imperial state, which made use of strong, able, and educated men to serve their political and military needs. This meant that there was a good deal of social mobility, upward and downward, within the groups. However, there was within the lay aristocracy a more stable subset of families whose extreme wealth gave them guaranteed access to the imperial court and thus rendered them difficult for the emperor to ignore or bring down.

In purely economic terms, the *dynatoi* incorporated the wealthy landowners who, unlike the *penetes* (middle and small landowners), were members of influential military families and thus could more easily enhance their wealth by acquiring abandoned lands. This situation was primarily the case in Asia Minor, where many lands lost or abandoned during the invasions in the 7th and 8th centuries CE were brought back into cultivation in the 9th century CE, when the Byzantine military position in the region improved. As a result, a number of important aristocratic families arose in Asia Minor. They gained much power and established themselves almost as a privileged class. In the early and middle 10th century CE, the families of Phokades and Maleinoi, for example, virtually controlled all the major military and administrative offices in Asia Minor. The *dynatoi* were able to use their power to enrich themselves and replace the *penetes,* who had once been the main social and economic support of the Byzantine Empire. The emperors, at times, acted to protect other social and economic groups from the growing power and wealth of the *dynatoi*. Several emperors, from Romanus I Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE) to Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE), enacted agrarian laws to limit the ability of the *dynatoi* to acquire personal control of military lands given to them for the support of the thematic armies, that is, the armies assigned to the defense of and enjoying the support of a defined military/political district. Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE) sought to limit the influence of the *dynatoi* by imposing the *allelengyon* tax and making the *dynatoi* responsible for paying the financial obligations of their less wealthy neighbors.

These efforts failed during the Comnenus Dynasty (r. 1081–1185), and this is when the rise of the provincial aristocracy occurred. These positions, as a rule, were not hereditary, but by the late 10th and early 11th centuries a few families so dominated these offices that by 1100 they in effect constituted a hereditary aristocracy. In the 12th century, large latifundia covered the countryside, taking land and resources from smaller communities. The Paleologian period (1261–1453) represented the peak of the influence of the *dynatoi*, marked by a simultaneous decline of the central government authority.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Senate; *Organization and Administration*: Hierarchy; Taxes; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Lecapenus, Romanus I

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Eunuchs

Eunuchs, castrated men, were a distinct characteristic of the Byzantine Empire, and they played a vital role in the functioning of the empire by participating in its social and professional life on all levels: they served in the Great Palace, the church, the army, the government, and in wealthy households. They served as administrators, teachers, household servants, and intermediaries.

Despite the shameful view of eunuchs during the early Roman Empire, the services supplied by them were in high demand. Becoming a eunuch was not acceptable for Romans, but it was for any non-Roman. Nevertheless, any non-Roman could not be castrated and become a eunuch. Slaves and prisoners of war were the primary sources of future eunuchs. As the Roman Empire was transitioning into the Byzantine Empire, the view of the eunuch started to change gradually. In the sixth century, the view toward eunuchs had not changed much, since Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) even forbade castration to take place within his domains. Still, this did not eliminate the need for eunuchs; it only caused the procedure to be performed outside the empire.

The rise of Islam and the growing power of the new caliphate provoked a greater need for eunuchs, and the existing supply was not sufficient anymore. Moreover, since the caliphate controlled markets in the East, new slave markets appeared in Venice and Rome. High demand obliged the Byzantine Empire to search for new sources of eunuchs instead of slaves and captives. During this time, being a eunuch became socially acceptable for the Byzantines. The common people understood eunuchs held many highly essential posts in the empire that gave them great power and ability to make wealth. Opportunities that becoming a eunuch could allow made the local Greeks willing to castrate their younger sons. These Greek-speaking eunuchs would enter the Great Palace or the church hoping to develop a profitable career. If they succeeded, they could advance the status of their family as well.

The worldview of the Orthodox Church was strict and hierarchical, and roles for all members of Byzantine society were clearly defined. But because the system was far from flexible, it required a particular class of individuals who could be trusted to serve as intermediaries between social groups that might not be able to interact freely with one another. Eunuchs, who were considered to be loyal and who could be either male or female, were free of the usual gender roles and any strictures they might carry. Thus, eunuchs could occupy many diverse positions in the Byzantine world.

There were numerous roles that eunuchs as slaves or servants could have in wealthy households. The master could leave his house feeling secure with his wife in the hands of a eunuch. Eunuchs, therefore, became responsible for their safety and for supplying their needs. Eunuchs were also highly educated and served as tutors for the children of the household, responsible for their education, upbringing, and overall well-being. Masters also employed eunuchs as intermediaries in numerous situations.

In the imperial court, eunuchs had innumerable chances to advance, and almost all offices were accessible to them, except for the prefecture of the city, the quaestorship, and the military posts that were held by "domestics." Among the eight

high-ranked posts a eunuch could hold, the chief was the *parakoimomenos*, the guardian of the imperial bedchamber, and the *protovestiarios*, the master of the imperial wardrobe. And no emperor had to fear being displaced by a powerful eunuch, for a man had to be able to father heirs to hold the throne. Because of their sense of loyalty, they became welcome additions to the imperial household, whose members relied on eunuchs to care for them. Eunuchs provided court security, gave advice and counsel, attended to the daily needs of courtiers, educated children, and served as intermediaries between groups. Eunuchs also conducted court ceremonials and upheld the protocols of court etiquette. In addition, new arrivals in the imperial court could count on the expertise of more experienced eunuchs to learn their duties correctly.

The fact that a eunuch could not take the throne for himself did not stop him from becoming ruler of the empire. Basil Lecapenus, a eunuch and illegitimate son of Romanus I (r. 920–944 CE), served four emperors. At the start Basil II's reign (r. 976–1025 CE), Basil Lecapenus effectively ruled the empire as regent for his young master, and, as a result, became rich and powerful.

Eunuchs could also serve in the Byzantine army or as imperial bodyguards for the emperor. Discrimination against eunuchs did not exist militarily, and eunuchs, as well as any other male, could be highly successful in battle. Narses, one of Justinian I's (r. 527–565 CE) most famous generals in the emperor's reconquest of the West, occupied one of the highest military commands in Byzantine history.

The early Christian Church prohibited castration, and no eunuch could become a priest. Members of the clergy were expected to control their lusts. The Byzantine church had a different approach toward this: it welcomed eunuchs into the clergy and admitted eunuchs to monastic communal life. The Byzantine church was so open to eunuchs that it even allowed them to reach the highest position in the clergy and to become the patriarch of Constantinople. In 933 CE, Emperor Romanus I (r. 920–944 CE) made his castrated son, Theophylact, patriarch of Constantinople, thus allowing him to govern the church through his compliant eunuch son. By subordinating the church to the throne, Theophylact allowed his father to focus on civil and military affairs.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Eastern Orthodox Church; *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; Market; Offices; Recruitment; Slavery; *Individuals*: Lecapenus, Romanus I; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople

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Family

At the top of the Byzantine social pyramid stood the all-powerful emperor, and its foundation was the nuclear family and its close relations. The family was, additionally, the most enduring social group in Byzantine society. The children of Byzantine families constituted a pillar upon which a thousand-year empire was founded and sustained.

Scholars usually classify families and households as examples of social organizations. A family usually functioned as a social unit bound together by blood as well as marriage, characterized by cohabitation and the common ownership of movable wealth and property (land). In Byzantine society, the majority of the population consisted of nuclear families, containing parents and unmarried children. However, many other households were also occupied by an extended family. The latter included parents, married children, and siblings. The typical Byzantine family (*oikogeneia*) consisted of parents and two or three children, although large families often included grandparents, relatives, slaves and servants, and even close friends.

By the sixth century CE, a body of civil and religious laws treated a family as a spiritual and socioeconomic entity. Promulgated in the sixth century CE, the Code of Justinian, the fundamental legal framework of Byzantine society for over 600 years, contained rules regulating family life. Family matters were also regulated by the canon law of the Byzantine church, a situation that often created conflicting views between the family legislation of church and state.

According to the civil law of Justinian's code, the marriage of man and woman was consensual and represented a basic unit for production, land ownership, or taxation. In Byzantine society, the family was a patriarchal one; that is, the man ran the household, controlled all the wealth and property, and was responsible for the payment of taxes. However, the role of women was important, indicated by the fact that often widows or, more rarely, unmarried women functioned as heads of households as contemporary sources suggest. In some cases, surnames were inherited from the mother's side of the family, although generally, the members of the household inherited the name of the father. When a woman married, she usually became a member of her husband's home, to which she brought her dowry in the form of money or property. The custom in Byzantine society was usually to restrict women to household tasks, while marriage provided women (wives and mothers) specific legal protection and allowed them the right to inherit.

Regarding children, the civil code stipulated that boys at the age of seven, sometimes even girls, were sent to elementary school. Those coming from wealthy families had tutors for sons and daughters, and when living in a larger city, even higher education was at their disposal. Unlike Western Europe, the surviving children divided the property equally. While in the rest of Europe the tradition of primogeniture was common, in the Byzantine Empire awarding the most substantial part of the land to the eldest son was not a way to secure territorial integrity of hereditary domains.

Most of what we know today about life in a Byzantine household comes from government tax records, which, due to the state's need for income, are particularly full. Unlike during the Roman classical period, Byzantine parent-child relationships were relatively distant and generational interaction was more circumscribed. With many properties in the Byzantine period often supporting a family of no more than four individuals, families seem to have been generally smaller in size. This was perhaps in part due to the Byzantine church, which encouraged celibacy and monasticism and discouraged remarriage and numerous children. The church, by displacing the Roman state religion, weakened the position of the Roman family and undermined the paternalism that had been the basis of that family. Another factor in the weakening of paternal authority was the formal acceptance of women as heads of households, a change introduced by Justinian in the 6th century CE. Women were now not automatically impoverished by the death of their husbands; widows acting as heads of households could maintain their economic status and had less need or desire to remarry. As this and other changes in the law gave women more legal rights and property protections, the all-powerful position in the family that fathers had enjoyed in Roman times was significantly reduced. In the 11th century CE, these social trends began to change as Byzantine society became more feudal.

In the middle Byzantine period, the civil and ecclesiastical rules regarding engagement, marriage, and divorce were often inconsistent or contradictory. For instance, civil law provided protections for betrothed and married women, but the church demanded harsher rules regarding the dissolution of marriage. Divorce was forbidden, and remarriage was unacceptable or, in some cases, even penalized by the church. Although Canon law—i.e., church law—declared that the husband and the wife had the same legal rights, the church often circumscribed the position of wives and limited their ability to leave bad or unhealthy marriages to only certain circumstances.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Feudalism; Slavery; Taxes; *Key Events*: *Corpus Iuris Civilis*

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Franks

After the demise of Roman authority in the West in the fifth century CE, a Germanic people, the Franks, created a powerful kingdom in Gaul (modern France).

The Romans first encountered the Franks in the third century CE, when the empire recruited them as soldiers in the imperial army and hired separate units of allied

Franks (known as *foederati*). This practice was an example of how the Roman Empire's western army became increasingly Germanic, with Germanic commanders along with allied tribes under their commanders, even when it was fighting Huns or other Germanic peoples. In the fourth century CE, groups of Franks began to put heavy pressure on the Rhine frontier, requiring imperial intervention, during the reign of Emperor Constantius II (r. 337–361 CE). Frankish pressure accelerated in the fifth century, when the empire struggled against a plethora of Germanic tribes and the arrival of the Huns, nomads from central Asia, which further accelerated Germanic movements.

To deal with this massive security challenge, each half of the Roman empire mainly worked independently, with central leadership emanating from Ravenna in the West (by this time, Rome was no longer serving as the political capital) and Constantinople in the East. In the early fifth century CE, the barrier of the Rhine River froze, allowing Vandals, Suebi, and Alans to cross unhindered and unopposed, while the Visigoths under Alaric, who was displeased with his opportunities in the East, attacked Italy and sacked Rome in 410 CE. To defend Gaul and Italy, the emperor withdrew troops from Britain in 407 CE, leaving the island to its defenses. Christian Romano-Celtic Britain was soon overrun by pagan, Germanic Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. In short time, Germanic groups had crossed the Pyrenees and seized Spain and then stepped across the continent to take Roman Africa. The empire was in the process of transformation to a new order. When Attila's Huns appeared in Gaul in the fifth century CE, a Roman general, Aetius, confronted him with an army of Germanic peoples and Germanic allies.

In this period, Frankish power increased under a tribal leader named Merovech, of whom little is known, but from whom a Frankish dynasty took its name: the Merovingian Dynasty ruled the Franks from the fifth to the eighth century CE. Merovech's son, Childeric (r. 458–481 CE), led the Franks in the service of a Roman commander, Aegidius, in the 460s CE, but the Franks soon carved out their domain. Childeric's son, Clovis, ruled from approximately 482 to 511 CE and was the dynasty's most important leader. Clovis defeated the last remaining Roman commander in northern Gaul and extended his power southward by defeating the Visigoths and Burgundians. The Franks dominated formerly Roman Gaul and held territory east of the Rhine River, which had never been under Roman control. Conquest brought much wealth and influence, and Clovis jealously guarded his grasp on power by murdering relatives and rivals and seizing their wealth. Clovis is also credited with issuing the first Frankish law code, the *Lex Salica*, though certainty about this attribution is in doubt.

In addition to expanding Frankish power, another significant event in his reign was Clovis's conversion to Catholic Christianity. This conversion meant that there was religious unity between the (former) Roman subjects and the Germanic warriors in command, in contrast to virtually all other Germanic groups in the empire's former western territories, who were either pagan or adhered to Arian Christianity, which was viewed as heretical by their subjects. Bishop Gregory of Tours, a sixth-century CE historian of the region, describes this celebrated event in his *History of the Franks*, a valuable source for the early Merovingian period.

Medieval manuscript illumination of the baptism of Clovis I, king of the Franks, presided over by Bishop Remigius of Reims while a dove representing the Holy Spirit carries a flask containing holy oil for the ceremony. (The British Library)

After the death of Clovis, each of his four sons inherited a piece of the kingdom. Such division inevitably weakened the Frankish power and provoked competition and conflict between the successors. This division also fueled the desire of each king to expand his domain and wealth against non-Frankish neighbors. And so, the Franks threatened Emperor Justinian's (r. 527–565 CE) defeat of the Ostrogoths in Italy and his restoration of Byzantine control there. With this looming Frankish threat, Narses, the Byzantine commander in Italy, beat back a Frankish invasion in 552 CE.

Gregory of Tours's *History of the Franks* closes before 600 CE, and our picture of the seventh-century CE Frankish kingdom is less clear. The rulers of this period became more remembered for their lack of activity, becoming referred to as "do nothing" kings, an image promoted by the Carolingian Dynasty, which overthrew its Merovingian predecessor in 751 CE. Much of the work of running the Frankish lands was managed by officials known as mayors of the palace, with one in the western portion of the realm, known as Neustria, and the other in the eastern portion, known as Austrasia. Through the century, the mayors of the palace sought to increase their power vis-à-vis the king and other elites. In the later seventh century CE, competition between elites in Neustria led to a call for assistance from Pippin, mayor of the palace

in Austrasia. At the battle of Tertry in 687 CE, Austrasia achieved ascendancy over Neustria and, more important for the future, Pippin II (who was the son of a former mayor) became mayor of the palace for both parts of the realm. Two of Pippin's sons later became mayors of the palace, most notably Charles Martel ("the Hammer") in Austrasia, who grasped power over Neustria even more securely. Charles fortified his position against Frankish rivals, allying with important religious leaders, and advanced Frankish interests against adversaries beyond the realm, such as the Saxons, Alamans, and Bavarians. At the Battle of Tours (also called Poitiers) in 732 CE in north-central Gaul, Charles defeated a Muslim army marching north from Arab-held Spain. His overall influence and his close ties with the religious establishment are evident in his burial at the famous Monastery of Saint Denis just outside of Paris, the traditional burial site of Frankish kings.

Two of Charles's sons also served as mayors, and one of these, Pippin III, asked Pope Zarachias (741–752 CE) if he could replace the legitimate reigning Merovingian king since he was the *de facto* ruling power. With papal approval, Pippin became king in 751 CE (r. 751–768 CE). This Frankish-papal alliance reflects a critical shift in Rome's orientation away from Constantinople during the eighth century CE. In return for this consent, the Franks became the protectors of the pope and papal territory in Italy against the Germanic Lombards. The pope's western shift coincided with Byzantium's period of Iconoclasm when relations between Rome and Constantinople became increasingly hostile.

In 768, Pippin's sons, Charles and Carloman, succeeded as rulers of the Frankish realm, but the former soon assumed primary leadership. Charles (768–814 CE), known as "the Great" or Charlemagne, was one of the dominant figures of the early Middle Ages. He was a great war leader who engaged in various military activities and a vast eastward expansion against Saxons, Slavs, and Avars, and also a patron of intellectual life and promoter of monasticism. He continued the Frankish role as protector of the papacy. He soundly defeated the Lombards and added the crown of the Lombards to his own. Charlemagne was the most powerful monarch in Latin Christendom. He was a Frankish king ruling a host of different peoples in western, central, and eastern Europe. On December 25, 800 CE, Pope Leo III (795–816 CE) crowned Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans in Saint Peter's Basilica, reviving this imperial title in the west that had been dormant for more than three centuries.

From the Byzantine perspective, this was an outrage, a claim on the imperial title that was rightfully controlled by Constantinople, where Empress Irene (r. 797–802 CE) was already on the throne. The papacy, however, argued that as a woman, Irene could not rightfully hold the throne and so, the position was vacant. Diplomatic wrangling followed. Decades before, Irene had proposed an alliance with Franks, secured by a marriage between her son, Constantine, and one of Charlemagne's daughters, but the western ruler refused to send the betrothed. After his coronation, Charlemagne offered to marry Irene as a resolution to imperial tensions. The mere potential for this marriage disturbed leading officials around Empress Irene, whose power was reliant on alliances with palace eunuchs, clergy, and monks. Military commanders staged a coup against her, arresting Irene and declaring Nicephorus, the

minister of finance, emperor in 802 CE. Yet, Nicephorus (r. 802–811 CE) was in little position to challenge the Franks because of a problem closer to home, the Bulgarians, against whom he died fighting in 811 CE.

Charlemagne died not long after, in 814 CE, and his only surviving son, Louis the Pious (814–840 CE), succeeded him in a reign marked by infighting among his children and a successful struggle to hold his father's massive realm together. His descendants divided the empire into three parts, West Francia, East Francia, and a contested region between the two that extended to Italy. Frankish power became increasingly fragmented and at odds, while Viking assaults began to hammer much of Latin Europe throughout the ninth century CE. Charlemagne's heirs continued to rule in these kingdoms into the 10th century CE when the Carolingian line ran out and new dynasties emerged in France and Germany.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; Law; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Irene; Justinian; Narses; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; Bulgarians; Eunuchs; Muslims; *Key Events*: Charlemagne, Coronation of; Iconoclastic Controversy; *Military*: *Foederati*; *Key Places*: Bulgaria; Byzantium

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Gentry

The medieval society in general terms recognized the gentry as formed by two higher estates of the realm, nobility and clergy. In subsequent periods, families of long descent, "gentle" ones, were also admitted to the gentry, rural upper-class society, although they never officially received a coat of arms. According to scholars, the term

"gentry" in the Byzantine context implies two different categories: from one side, moderately wealthy provincial landowners who traditionally filled the ranks of theme cavalry, and from the other, so-called town-based landlord elite.

Emperor Constans II (r. 641–668 CE) settled his mobile armies in specific districts called themes. The new organization of themes introduced regional army groups under the command of a senior general or *strategos*. The themes became both regional frontier troops and mobile field armies. Besides the military function, the themes were also an important part of imperial social structure. The soldiers of a theme were the legal owners of the land itself, which they had received through imperial grants within the region. This policy resembles land grants during the early Roman Empire. The soldiers did not work the fields, but their ownership of the land was significant for the defense of their theme.

In the eighth century, Emperor Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE) created several elite cavalry units called *tagmata*, first as a reaction to a rebellious theme in Anatolia, then for offensive campaigns against the Arabs and Bulgars. The rise of *tagmata* was an important factor for loss of interest to serve in themes, and there was more than one reason for it. Among the most important ones were better pay, occasional booty, and the status of being a soldier. The possibility of spending more time in the capital was also appealing for soldiers. Consequently, recruitment of the provincial gentry to the theme armies became a problem in the ninth century, and the government was forced to make military service compulsory and hereditary.

The second social group related to gentry was the so-called "bourgeois gentry." During the era of the Comneni (1081–1185), they were recognized among residents of Constantinople, and usually they were rentiers who had properties in the urban and rural areas. They were engaged in trade and market, but they had a plan to advance in their careers in a different direction. Education became their first choice, since this provided access to offices of the imperial government and the church. The triumph of the Comneni enabled them to be in the service of a dynasty. As administrators they came to form a *noblesse de robe*, a class of hereditary nobles who acquired their rank through holding high administrative posts. Old aristocratic families failed to enter Comnenian circles, and gentry could rise. During the period they became synonymous to the educated elite but still subordinated to the ruling imperial family. The "bourgeois gentry" also occupied an increasing number of offices in the church.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Market; Offices; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; *Military*: *Strategos*; *Tagmata*; Themes

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Iconoclasts

In the history of the Byzantine Empire, Iconoclasts ("image breakers") were supporters of Iconoclasm, opposition to religious images began during the reign of Leo III the Isaurian (r. 717–741 CE). Nevertheless, it did not become official policy until his, son, Constantine V (ca. 741–775 CE) banned the making of icons in 754 CE. The period from 730 to 787 CE is known as "first Iconoclasm." The prohibition was lifted from 787 to 815 CE but introduced again thereafter in the "second" period from 812 to 843 CE. Mosaics in churches of the time reveal that figurative religious images were replaced with plain crosses, geometric designs, or drawings of leaves. After Iconoclasm ended in 843 CE, writers opposed to the ban reported that huge numbers of icons had been destroyed. However, according to some historians, their claims might be exaggerated to discredit Iconoclast emperors.

This 11th-century manuscript illustration from a Byzantine psalter (book of psalms) depicts Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, and Theodore, abbot of the Studite monastery in Constantinople, showing their support of icon veneration by holding an icon of Christ. Below, they speak with Emperor Leo V, who rejected icon veneration and instituted a second wave of Iconoclasm, which is depicted at right where Iconoclast clerics paint over an icon. (Art Media/Print Collector/Getty Images)

In the sixth and seventh centuries, images of Jesus Christ, Mary, and saints appeared increasingly in churches and became the most important form of Byzantine religiosity. Many on the other side questioned this practice and feared the cult of icons could be opposed to Christianity as a spiritual religion. In response, in 725 CE, Byzantine Emperor Leo III presented a new idea related to representations on icons. Leo suggested that icons, or statues and paintings of Jesus Christ, were contrary to the Second Commandment of Moses—"You shall not make any graven images." Also, the emperor thought that icons were not in accordance to the belief that Christ was entirely god. If he were a god, he should not be shown as a man. It is important to stress that people in the Byzantine Empire were not just looking at these icons but, more important, also praying to them and even choosing them to be godfathers to their children.

CHALKE GATE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

The Chalke gate was the main ceremonial entrance to the Great Palace in Constantinople during the Byzantine Empire. The word "chalke" means bronze, so the name was given because of either the bronze portals or gilded tiles used for the roof structure. The interior had rich decoration with marble and mosaics, while many statutes were placed on the exterior. The most distinguished and most important for the history of the empire and the church was an icon of Christ along with a chapel dedicated to the Christe Chalkites. The chapel was constructed in the 10th century next to the gate. The icon (Christ Chalkites or Christ of the Chalke) stood above the main entrance. Its origins are unknown; some sources reference its existence before 600 BCE, but it is not certain. Because of its position, it became one of the most important religious symbols of the capital city. After being removed in 730 CE because of Iconoclasm, it was restored in 787 CE. The Second Iconoclast period forced its removal again and replacement by the simple cross. Definitive restoration of icons after 843 CE brought a mosaic in its place, a work by famous monk and artist Lazaros. The exact aspect of the icon is unknown. It is usually referenced either as a bust of Christ, *Christ Pantocrator*, or Christ on a pedestal.

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There is a strong conviction that Leo was influenced by Jewish and Islamic cultures, since it is known that images had been destroyed previously in the Umayyad Empire in the East. Also, many local people believed that it was wrong to make any image of the gods or even to represent humans like gods or saints.

Leo ordered the destruction of all icons, and as an example he himself destroyed some and ordered removal of the one above the imperial Bronze Gate in Constantinople. Nevertheless, Leo's move was opposed in European parts of the empire. In Greece, for example, the news about the emperor's decision provoked protests on the streets. In the early phase, the emperor wanted to negotiate with those opposing his decisions and to convince both Germanus, the patriarch of Constantinople, and the pope. He had no success in his attempts. In 730 CE, he convoked a "silention," an assembly of the highest church representatives and state officials. During its sessions, the edict against icons was proclaimed. This resolution made persecution of Iconodules (image venerators) legal and seriously disrupted relations with Rome.

Leo's son, the emperor Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), was a more vigorous Iconoclast than his father had been. During his reign, Iconophiles from all levels of the Byzantine society, including the army and administration, the church, and in monasteries, were persecuted. Additionally, an Iconoclast theory of images has been developed, and it was adopted by the acts of the Council of Hieira held in 754 CE. The destruction of icons was ordered, image veneration was declared illegal, and the most distinguished Iconodules in the empire, among them the patriarch Germanus and John of Damascus, were condemned. Constantine's Iconoclasm led to a breach with the papacy and loss of influence in Italy.

The rise of Iconoclasm finished with the end of Constantine's rule. His successor, son Leo IV (r. 775–780 CE), did not give up his father's Iconoclastic policy, but he was

not extremist. In addition, his wife, Empress Irene, was an ardent Iconophile. Leo's reign was very short, and his ten-year-old son occupied the throne while Irene acted as regent, functioning as the actual ruler. She carefully prepared the next Ecumenical Council, which started in Constantinople in 786 CE. The first session was interrupted by military forces, supporters of Iconoclasm. Therefore, the next session of the council was held in Nicaea, known as the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the last one recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Church. Finally, the council condemned Iconoclasm as a heresy, ordered all Iconoclastic writings to be destroyed, and restored the cult of icons. This formal condemnation of Iconoclasm did not mean that state officials and the people stopped supporting it. During this period, conflicts between two opposing sides were present, until Irene was officially crowned as sole ruler.

The resurgence of Iconoclasm in the ninth century had its first representative in the person of Emperor Leo V Armenian (r. 813–820 CE). Upon his order, a new council was held in Hagia Sophia in 815 CE, confirming all decisions from the council in 754 CE. Leo's policy was moderate to a certain extent, since the council banned icons but declared that their veneration was not idolatry. The last rise, which was marked by fierce persecution of monks, happened during the reign of Theophilus (r. 829–842 CE). The death of Theophilus in 842 CE was the end of Iconoclasm.

After the restoration of religious images in 843 CE, the production of icons in all media exploded, with many emphasizing even more Christ's human nature and physical suffering.

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See also: *Individuals*: Irene; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Groups and Organizations*; Iconodules; *Key Events*: Iconoclastic Controversy; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Iconodules

Iconodules, or Iconophiles, were defenders of the veneration of icons during the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries. Iconodules opposed Iconoclasts and argued that the icon's image did not actually represent the person, or saint, depicted. Empresses Irene and Theodora, theologists John of Damascus and

Theodore the Studite, and Patriarchs Nicephorus I and Germanus I were among the most important Iconophiles.

John of Damascus, a Greek monk from a monastery in Jerusalem, was the strongest Iconoclasm opponent in the first period. In defense of cult of icons, he wrote three speeches. His teachings explained icons as symbols of Neoplatonism, which considered icons of Christ as his incarnation. Theodore the Studite, a monk from a Constantinople monastery, was an Iconodule who prepared a counterargument against Iconoclasm in his writings and letters during the second Iconoclastic period in the ninth century. In the opinion of these two Iconophiles, the Iconoclast explanation was confusing. According to them, images of Christ do not depict natures, being either divine or human, but a concrete person—Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. They claimed that Christ is an example where Old Testament prohibition did not apply: any representation of God, or anything that could be worshipped as God, was prohibited because it was not possible to depict the invisible God. Therefore, any such representation would be an idol, either false representation or false god. But in Christ's person God became visible as a concrete human being, so painting Christ necessarily proves that God truly became man. The fact that one can depict Christ witnesses God's incarnation.

When Patriarch Germanus I refused to sign the edict against icons imposed by Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE), he was deposed and replaced by Anastasius, who was willing to follow the emperor's order. This edict from 730 CE also represented the separation from Rome because Leo did not manage to convince the pope in his decision. The pope in turn condemned the emperor at a council in Rome, which weakened the Byzantine influence in Italy.

The 16 months of rule by Emperor Artavazd was a short period of restoration of icons. His successor, Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), returned to the old policy toward icons and started thorough preparations for the church council in 754 CE. He placed Iconoclasts in bishops' positions, founded some new dioceses, and organized energetic propaganda against icons. Iconophiles were accused of being heretics—either as Nestorians, because if icons depict Christ's human side, then they separate their inseparable nature, or as Monophysites, because if they represent parallelly both human and divine, then they unite something that could not be unified. On the last session of the council, Germanus I and John of Damascus were anathematized and veneration of icons was forbidden. It was time for the emperor to put in force decisions of the council and to persecute Iconodules. His fanatical will was challenged by his equally fanatical adversaries. The leader of the opposition was Stephen the Younger, a monk from a monastery in Constantinople. His strongest opponents were monks, so Iconoclasm was converted into a movement against monasticism. Monks throughout the empire were forced to abandon monastic life, monasteries were closed and converted into public buildings, and their properties and lands were confiscated. This led to massive immigration of monks to southern Italy, where they introduced Hellenic culture.

The rule of Leo IV (r. 775–780 CE), introduced the restoration of icons, due to his moderate policy toward monks and influence of his wife, Irene, an Iconodule born in Athens who would soon become an empress. The veneration of icons was restored

twice, both times when empresses ruled the Byzantine Empire. The first Iconoclastic period ended when Empress Irene, a committed and uncompromising Iconodule, ruled as a regent for her son, Constantine VI. It was an interlude from 780 to 787 CE when she organized the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Second) in Nicaea in 787 CE that confirmed icon veneration.

Emperor Leo V the Armenian (r. 813–820 CE) initiated the Second Iconoclastic period, which ended in 843 CE during the reign of Empress Theodora, who was regent for her son, Michael. Especially significant was the period under the leadership of Patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople, who held this title for two terms, from 847 to 858 CE and from 867 to 877 CE. Since restoration of icons was officially proclaimed in 843 CE, the Orthodox Church has celebrated the Feast of the Orthodoxy, which takes place on the first Sunday of Great Lent.

The Iconoclast disputes led to the theological definition of the role and function of the icon in the Byzantine church, and in the liturgy as well. The icon became the most important expression of the Byzantine religiosity.

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See also: *Individuals*: Irene; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Groups and Organizations*: Iconoclasts; Monophysites; Nestorians; *Key Events*: Iconoclastic Controversy

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Khazars

The Khazars, a nomadic Turkic people, ruled a powerful kingdom called a khanate in the steppe region north of the Black and Caspian Seas from the 7th to the 10th centuries. They ruled a diverse group of peoples and maintained control over valuable trade routes, a section of the famed Silk Road, which furnished them with great wealth. Their territorial control also brought them into direct contact with the Umayyad and then Abbasid Caliphates to their south and with the Bulgar Kingdom to their west. Because of these strategic connections, a cornerstone of Byzantine diplomacy was the maintenance of close ties with the Khazars throughout this period. As a marker of their independence and in reaction to Christianity emanating from the west and Islam from the south, the Khazar ruling elite adopted

Judaism in the late 8th century. In the later 10th century, with the rise of the Rus' and the increasing power of Kiev on the Dnieper River, the Khazars were displaced as a regional power.

The alliance between Byzantium and the Khazars began with Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), during the long and cataclysmic Byzantine-Sassanid Persian War (602–629 CE). Khazar attacks on Persian territory greatly helped the Byzantine cause, and Khazar forces contributed much to the empire's final victory in the prolonged conflict. While Khazar strength was a great help to Byzantium, it also caused another Turkic tribe, the Bulgars, to move farther west and on a collision course with the empire. The nomadic Bulgars were, in time, Slavicized and Christianized, and created an agricultural (nonnomadic) state just north of the Byzantine Empire that would intertwine with the empire for the rest of Byzantine history. In the late seventh century CE, Emperor Justinian II (r. 685–695; 705–711 CE) was mutilated and deposed, and then exiled to Crimea in the northern Black Sea, from where he escaped and sought refuge with the Khazar khan. Justinian married the khan's daughter, who received baptism and converted to Christianity. Concerned with recovering this imperial fugitive, Byzantine diplomacy aimed at obliging Justinian's extradition. Fearing for his safety, Justinian fled to the Bulgars, without his Khazar bride, and won their support for his bid to regain power, which he achieved in 705 CE. In opposition to the new emperor, the Crimean city of Cherson rebelled and called in Khazar support for defense. The city proclaimed as emperor another exiled official, Philippicus (r. 711–713 CE), who prevailed against and executed Justinian II.

Byzantium established a stronger alliance with the Khazars during the reign of Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE), who began his tenure on the throne by withstanding a massive Arab siege of Constantinople, a harbinger of better days for the empire after the cataclysms of the seventh century. In 722 CE, the Khazars attacked the Ummayad Caliphate in Armenia, which temporarily relieved the Byzantine Empire from Arab raids. In 733 CE, the Khazars were expelled from Armenia and the Arabs advanced north into Khazar territory. It was at this time that Leo arranged for his son Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE) to marry the daughter of the Khazar khan. She too became a Christian, taking a baptismal (Greek) name, Irene. This event did not lead to the conversion of the Khazars. Despite these ties, no Byzantine assistance could be spared, and the Arabs defeated the Khazars and pursued their conversion to Islam, though this compulsory effort did not take hold. The child of Constantine and his Khazar bribe became Emperor Leo IV (r. 775–780 CE).

Caught between Christian and Muslim influences, the Khazar ruling clan chose to adopt the remaining Abrahamic faith, Judaism. In the ninth century, brothers Methodius and Constantine (the future Cyril), later known as the "Apostles to the Slavs," served on a mission to the Khazars, where they sought to turn the khan from Judaism to Christianity. The Byzantine mission failed, but on their return, Constantine discovered relics in the Crimea that he believed to be those of Saint Clement of Rome.

Khazar power waned considerably in the face of assaults by the Kievan ruler Svyatoslav (945–972 CE) and by the emergence of another Turkic nomadic power, the Pechenegs.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Individuals*: Heraclius; Leo III, the Isaurian; Methodius and Cyril, Apostles to the Slavs; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Muslims; Persians; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with

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Mesoi

The term *mesoi*, along with its derivative *mesotes* (middle status in Greek), appeared during the 14th century in the sources of the Palaeologus period 1261–1453, referring to the middle class in Byzantine society. In fact, the *mesoi* were people positioned between the rich, mainly aristocrats, and artisans and small shopkeepers. These were manufacturers and merchants with a certain degree of wealth but without the status of aristocracy, as it was demonstrated in the works by Alexios Makrembolites, "Dialogue between the rich and the poor."

There has been a large debate over the identity of the *mesoi*, primarily because of their supposed "disappearance" from the sources after the middle of the 14th century. Only a few references are at our disposal, and many of these are not all clear. In these references, the authors seem to mention an intermediate financial status between wealth and poverty, and not a specific social group.

Some historians placed the *mesoi* among the upper middle class, the bourgeois. They were, according to them, large-scale merchants, owners of industries, ship owners, bankers, etc. It is obvious that scholars in this case have targeted specific professional groups. Others identify the *mesoi* with all the people active in urban economical activities, regardless of their economic standing. Interestingly, they indicate a layer of

these *mesoi* occupied with the financial service to the state, or the high aristocracy: tax collectors or stewards of the aristocrats' properties. Finally, there are also scholars who located the *mesoi* a little below; they included the *literati* and ecclesiastical dignitaries, the middle-size farmers, and in general the artisans and the merchants. The wealthier of them would be introduced to the state hierarchy. In fact, they refer to a middle class and not to a specific group.

Generally, the *mesoi* was more a descriptive term than a structural one. It encompassed simply those of middle financial status, whatever their professional or social background was. Thus, a concept of a middle class in the Byzantine Empire should not only incorporate the people of middle economic standing in the cities but should also include independent peasants and the soldiers.

The Byzantine cities were known for their sharp economic and social divisions, and they were strongly marked in the 14th century. The cities were under strong domination of the aristocracy. In the first half of the 14th century, some sources started emphasizing *mesoi* or the "middle" class that found its position between the rich and the poor. The landowning aristocracy was identified as the rich, while the poor were related to the artisans and small-scale traders. The *mesoi* are recognized as those who produced wealth and were able to multiply it, and some of them made a considerable fortune and enjoyed appreciable purchasing power. Although the merchants and artisans were considered rich at the time, they were still in a position inferior to that of the aristocracy.

This classification of the urban population in the Byzantine Empire was new, but it did not last long. The turbulent accounts in the middle 14th century affected mainly the aristocracy, which was left without land and therefore was forced to engage in trade and banking. This is how the *mesoi* gradually lost their status. The civil war of 1352–1357 was originally a dynastic dispute but acquired social dimension in certain cities of Macedonia and Thrace: Constantinople, and Thessalonica on the first place, but also in Adrianople (modern Edirne, Turkey), Vizye (Turkey), and Didymoteichon (today in Greece). In these cities the merchants, the seamen, and, to some extent, bankers contested vigorously to the monopoly of the aristocracy. The victory of Kantakouzenos was significant for the aristocracy and had strong implications for this dynamic social group. A new, yet not entirely dominant group appeared on the social scene of the empire, known as aristocratic entrepreneurs. They faced large-scale loss of their lands due to the Ottoman and Serbian conquests, so they were not able to rely any more on this type of income. Therefore, they adopted the strategy of *mesoi* and started investing their capital in commerce and banking.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Hierarchy; Taxes; *Groups and Organizations*: *Dynatoi*; Muslims; Professional Associations

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Monophysites

Monophysite Christianity is practiced today mainly by communities in Armenia, Ethiopia, and Egypt and their diasporic communities, mostly in Europe and the United States. The origin of Monophysite Christianity is found in the Byzantine Empire in the fifth century CE amid the intense theological debates about Christology, that is, about the human and divine natures of Christ.

In 325, Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) mustered the bishops of the empire for an ecumenical (meaning "universal") council, an assembly of Christian leaders representing the entire church. This first ecumenical council convened at Nicaea to resolve a controversy over the proper understanding of the relationship between Jesus, the Son, and God, the Father. Arius, a priest at Alexandria, had taught that the Son was a created being, though that creation occurred before all things, even before time itself. The council condemned Arianism and decreed that the Son was of the same nature ("homoousios") with the Father. The council issued a creed, a statement that the faithful could recite and easily memorize to learn correct theology.

After Nicaea, Arianism continued to influence bishops and emperors in the fourth century CE. Thus, in 381 CE, Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE) summoned to Constantinople the Second Ecumenical Council, which again addressed the matter. The Council of Constantinople rejected Arianism and added further Trinitarian language (that is, language referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to the Nicene Creed. As with Nicaea, the council also established canons on matters of discipline and church organization, including recognizing the bishop of Constantinople, officially founded in 330 CE, as second only to the bishop of Rome.

The Third Ecumenical Council took place at the port city of Ephesus, located on the western Coast of Anatolia about 300 miles from Constantinople. It was called to deliberate the theology of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who believed that the divine and human natures in Jesus were separate. Thus, Nestorius argued that the Virgin Mary should be called "Christ-bearer," having given birth only to the human person of Jesus, and not "God-bearer" (Theotokos), as she was then known. Bishop Cyril of Alexandria, who dominated the council, vigorously opposed Nestorius's position. Cyril argued that, according to scripture, the Word of God became flesh and so, Mary had given birth both to God and man in the form of Jesus. Cyril won the day. The council deposed Nestorius and condemned his theology.

Monophysite theology emerged in the aftermath of Ephesus as Christology continued to be a source of debate and controversy: How was the relationship between Christ's human and divine natures to be explained? Alexandrian theologians began to view the divine nature as absorbing the human so that it was possible to speak of one nature in Christ, a position called Monophysite ("one nature"). In 451 CE, Emperor Marcian (r. 450–457 CE) summoned the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon, just across the Bosporus strait from Constantinople. Here, the council condemned Monophysite theology and defined Christ as having two natures (utterly human and utterly divine), but with a unity nonetheless, without division or

separation. The council also addressed matters of governance, including the subordination of monks to bishops in their jurisdictions, and setting church precedence, decreeing that the bishop of Jerusalem was the fifth great leader of Christendom, behind Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch. More controversially, the council declared that Constantinople was second in place, but equal to Rome in all but honor. The church in Egypt rejected Chalcedon. This created the first major schism in the Christian world, with much of Egypt and Syria, along with Armenia and Ethiopia, eventually embracing Monophysite rather than Chalcedonian theology. Thus, the first three ecumenical councils unified the two theological communities, but the Fourth Ecumenical Council marked the separation.

After Chalcedon, Byzantine emperors tried to bridge the theological divide to keep both Rome (pro-Chalcedon) and Alexandria (Monophysite, anti-Chalcedon) in union with Constantinople. Some emperors leaned toward the Monophysite cause, including Anastasius (r. 491–518 CE). This emperor progressively revealed his anti-Chalcedonian, Monophysite inclination and he left in place his predecessor's edict, the *Henoticon*, which tried to emphasize points of theological unity and steered clear of contentious matters, and by doing so, the emperor perpetuated the schism with Rome that had begun in 482 CE, when Emperor Zeno (r. 474–475; 476–491 CE) issued the edict. In 496 CE, Patriarch Euphemius of Constantinople desired to negotiate with Rome for an end to the schism, but he was deposed. The emperor appointed a new patriarch, who was a Chalcedonian but willing to tolerate the *Henoticon*. As the emperor began his third decade in power, he became openly supportive of Monophysite theology. In 511 CE, he deposed the pro-Chalcedonian bishop of Constantinople and replaced him with a Monophysite, Timothy I (511–518 CE), who incorporated Monophysite theology into the liturgy at Hagia Sophia by adding to the *Trisagion* chant ("Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts"), the phrase "who was crucified for us." Anastasius (r. 491–518 CE) also appointed the Monophysite monk Severus as the patriarch of Antioch. These changes triggered rioting in Constantinople, where pro-Chalcedon advocates led a failed attempt to depose the emperor. The religious division also fomented a military rebellion, when Vitalian, the Count of Federate Troops in Thrace, revolted in 514 CE. He was a Chalcedonian and the godson of Flavian II, the deposed Chalcedonian bishop of Antioch, whom Severus replaced. Vitalian aimed to pressure Anastasius to the negotiating table with the bishop of Rome to restore a pro-Chalcedonian policy, but he met with failure in 515 CE.

Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) desperately sought to achieve Christian unity. He had ended the schism with Rome during the reign of his uncle, Justin I (r. 518–527 CE), but the more difficult challenge was to secure the loyalty of Alexandria and Antioch, where Monophysite theology dominated. Justinian tried persecution, but this failed. As a supporter of Monophysite Christianity, Empress Theodora protected Monophysite leaders, even as Justinian was persecuting them. The historian Procopius in his *Secret History* alleged that this was an imperial strategy to show support of contradictory theologies from the same imperial palace. In 533 CE, Justinian shifted to negotiation, welcoming Monophysite leaders for discussion and trying to forge a compromise by rejecting extreme Monophysite theology, while agreeing on what they

MONOTHELITISM

Monothelitism (Greek meaning "one will") is a seventh-century teaching about how the divine and human relate in the person of Jesus. This Christological doctrine teaches that Christ has two natures but one will. The Orthodox interpretation explains that Jesus Christ had two wills (human and divine) corresponding to his two natures. Monothelitism developed from Monophysitism as a continuation of the Christological dispute. It originated because of the efforts of Emperor Heraclius to regain sympathy of persecuted Monophysites of Egypt and Syria. He first suggested to the head of the Severian Monophysites in 622 CE that the divine and human natures in Christ, while quite distinct in his one person, had but one will and one operation. In 638 CE, Heraclius issued the "Statement of Faith," which formulated the position. It aroused such controversy that Heraclius's successor, Constans II, was forced to issue an edict in 648 CE forbidding all discussion over the question. When Constantine IV became emperor in 668 CE, the controversy was revived, and the new emperor called a general council in Constantinople in 680 CE. Despite the great support it gained, the Sixth Ecumenical Council condemned Monothelitism, proclaiming it as a heresy and asserted two wills and two operations in the person of Christ.

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could mutually condemn. He formerly accused three authors deemed "pro-Nestorian": Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Ibas of Edessa, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Justinian received an agreement from the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and, through compulsion, Rome. In 533 CE, the Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople confirmed this decision but did not resolve the fundamental problem. It proved impossible to find a theological solution that would be acceptable to both Rome and Monophysite leaders in the east. While Justinian struggled on, Theodora became the patron of a burgeoning Monophysite ecclesiastical organization, separate from the Orthodox one. She arranged for the appointment of the Monophysite John of Amida (also known as John of Ephesus) as a missionary to pagans and was said to have converted some 70,000. She also ensured the consecration of Bishop Jacob Bar'adai (ca. 500–578 CE), whom she had been protecting in Constantinople. He became the organizer of the Monophysite Church in Syria. Because of his work, the Monophysite Christian Church in Syria is sometimes known as the "Jacobite" Church.

In the seventh century CE, Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) proposed a compromise that, regardless of Christ's one or two natures, Jesus had only one will, a position called Monotheletism ("one will"). This theological position also proved to be unsuccessful, and the Sixth Ecumenical Council, also held at Constantinople in 681 CE, condemned it. There would be no reconciliation between the Monophysite and Chalcedonian theologies, which remain divided to this day.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; Patriarchs; *Individuals*: Anastasius, Flavius; Constantine the Great; Justinian; Procopius; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; Nestorians; *Key Events*: *Henoticon*; Nicaea, Council of; Second Ecumenical

Council of Constantinople; Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus; *Key Places*: Antioch; Byzantium; Egypt; Jerusalem

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Muslims

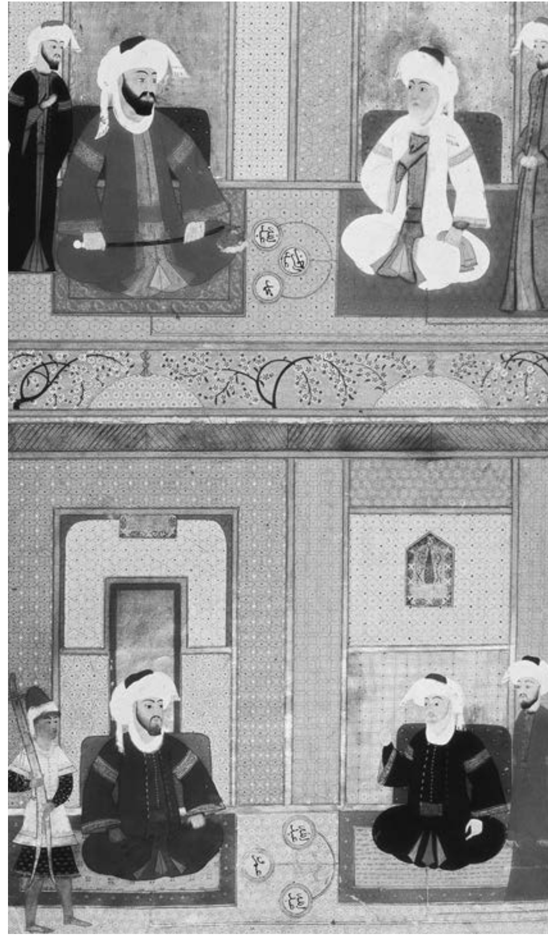
The religion of Islam emerged in Arabia in the seventh century CE. Arabia had been connected to regions beyond by trade moving by sea via the Red Sea and by land routes between Yemen in southern Arabia and the Levant in the Roman Empire. Arabia lay between the great empires of Rome and Persia and was influenced by them but remained beyond their political control. There were diverse groups in the Arabian Peninsula, including the Bedouin, the migratory people of the desert, organized by clan and tribe, and led by a sheikh. Such membership was the source of identity and protection, and to be without this protection would risk the gravest peril. One cultural feature that connected these Bedouin communities was a shared language and the esteem in which they held oral poetry and the bards who mastered this craft.

Rome and Sassanian Persia patronized various tribes to protect their desert frontiers from Arab raids. Thus, these empires were aware of the problem of desert raiders and used their wealth to gain tribal loyalty to serve as border patrol, which also spread Persian and Roman cultural influence among the Arabs. Each empire sought to assert its authority over Arabia as much as possible, though they could never penetrate the desert interior. They aimed their efforts at the periphery, notably southern Arabia. In the sixth century CE, the Byzantines supported the invasion of Yemen by the Christian king of Aksum to promote Christianity and pro-Byzantine rule, while in the early seventh century CE, Persia asserted its authority over this region.

It was in that same period, the early seventh century CE, when Rome and Persia were locked in a long and disastrous war, which left both empires weakened and bankrupted, so that they terminated the imperial subsidies to the Arab tribes on the frontiers. Rome was the war's victor, but it was an empty victory, leaving both empires ruined and now devoid of protection from their Arab frontiers. While that war was raging, Islam first appeared in the oasis town of Mecca, located on the trade route in the Hijaz, the mountainous region between the Red Sea and barren Arabian Desert. Mecca was both a trade center and an important religious site, as well as important pilgrimage destination for all Arab communities. As a place of trade and pilgrimage, even before the emergence of Islam, Mecca was a location where groups put their rivalries on hold to worship and conduct business.

It was in Mecca that Muhammad was born and here that he received his first religious message. Muhammad was said to have received his first revelation from on high,

delivered via an angel, in 610 CE. He was told to recite the message he received. These revelations and recitations continued for the rest of his life and were later collected and compiled into the Muslim scripture known as the Koran, which means "Recitation" in Arabic. Muslims view the Koran as the literal word of God, expected to be read and recited in Arabic. In the Muslim view, Muhammad was not the author but the prophet through whom the message passed. The author was God.



This Turkish image from the 16th century shows the first four caliphs of Islam—Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman, and Ali—known as the Rashidun ("rightly guided"). During their reigns (632–661 CE), Arab Muslims conquered the Sassanid Empire, Egypt and much of North Africa, and the Levant. The Byzantine army, led by Heraclius, suffered many serious defeats. (Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

Muslims understand Muhammad to be God's final prophet, the seal of the prophetic tradition, which started with Abraham and Moses and concluded in the seventh century CE with Muhammad, whose role was to correct the message of Abraham and Jesus, followed by Jews and Christians, which had become corrupted. Thus, the religion of Muhammad was part of the Abrahamic and Monotheistic tradition, along with Judaism and Christianity. These were three sibling and competitive religions. The doctrine of Muhammad's message is known as Islam, meaning Submission to God, and his followers called Muslims, that is, those who submit. This message is one of uncompromising monotheism that challenged the polytheism of traditional Arab culture as well as the ideas of Christianity, which, from the Muslim perspective, mistakenly converted a prophet named Jesus into a son of God, but God, in their view, has no children and needs no helpers to do the work of salvation.

Muhammad's monotheistic message was not, at first, well received, and he incurred the hostility of his tribe, which protected, and benefited from, the lucrative pilgrimage site of Mecca. When his uncle died, he lost the protector and his life was in peril. Muhammad and his early Muslim followers fled Mecca and took refuge at Yathrib,

later named Medina, where he became the religious and political leader of a community, the *Umma*. From Medina, Muhammad began to consolidate his position, including against Jewish tribes that did not support his vision as well as against his opponents in Mecca, which he succeeded in taking in 630 CE. Muhammad united the tribes of Arabia as never before and this unity continued after his death in 632 CE.

With Muhammad's death, the prophetic tradition ended, but not the role of leadership of the *Umma*, where Muhammad was replaced by his deputy, or caliph, who functioned like a sheikh leading a supertribe. At first the caliphs ruled from Medina in Arabia, and the first four 7th-century CE caliphs were close associates of the prophet Muhammad, but in 661 CE a dynastic principle took hold. The Umayyad Dynasty (661–750 CE) ruled from Damascus in Syria, succeeded by the Abbasid Dynasty in the mid-8th to the 13th century. The Abbasids built a new capital, the great city of Baghdad on the Tigris River, only a short distance from ancient Babylon and the former Sassanid capital, Ctesiphon.

The early caliphs channeled this Arabian unity outwardly against the Sassanian and Roman Empires, which were reeling from more than two decades of warfare against one another. As a result, Arab forces over the course of the seventh century CE and early eighth century CE quickly overwhelmed Persia and conquered most of the Byzantine Empire's territories. These conquests expanded the *Dar al-Islam* ("Abode of Islam") against the *Dar al-Harb* ("House of War").

Several important developments occurred over this time:

At first, Muslim rulers did not seek to convert, but merely to rule. They created garrison towns that separated the Arab and Muslim communities from the conquered, non-Muslim, non-Arab populations in Iraq, Egypt, North Africa, and Persia. In time, however, these garrison towns became new cities, like Basra and Kufa in Iraq, Fustat in Egypt, and Qayrawan in North Africa. Muslims ruled non-Muslim subjects and placed special restrictions upon them that distinguished these peoples from the more privileged Muslim elite and by taxing them. While they discriminated, they did not, overall, persecute these other faiths in this period.

The Arabs borrowed administrative structures from the Romans and Persians and collected and built on the knowledge inherited from the classical traditions of the Mediterranean and southwest Asia. Arab scientific and philosophical inquiry flourished in the ninth century CE, studying great thinkers like Aristotle, and this study later passed back into Latin Europe, via Spain.

In time, many non-Arabs were drawn to Islam, whether by the attraction of moving from a disempowered to an empowered class or by religious motivation or some combination of various factors. This transition at first caused tension, and the Abbasids were able to rise to power in the eighth century CE by utilizing that tension. Eventually, such conversions resulted in a far more cosmopolitan Muslim empire, where Arabs eventually became a minority of total believers as Africans, Persians, Turks, and others entered the *Umma*.

The caliphate was vast, stretching from Spain in the west all the way to central Asia in the east. By the 9th century CE, the caliphate had reached its zenith and Baghdad's

ability to hold the empire together weakened. Reasons differed: in Spain a branch of the Umayyad family rejected the legitimacy of the Abbasid Caliphate, while elsewhere, as in Egypt, powerful military governors acted with virtual independence, while feigning obedience to the caliph. By the 10th century CE, regional rulers dominated. Baghdad's power had vastly declined, but not its prestige.

It was in the 10th century CE that Byzantine armies began to take the offensive against the now weaker Muslim frontier in the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and Syria. This development represented a dramatic transition from the shock of the Arab advance in the 7th century CE, which had made the entire empire a contested frontier zone. This cataclysm brought the early Byzantine period to an end and marked the beginning of a new phase of Byzantine history: the middle Byzantine period (7th to 12th centuries). When Crete fell to Muslim forces in the 9th century CE, even the Aegean Sea became contested waters.

Twice, Muslim armies besieged Constantinople. The first was a prolonged siege from 674–678 CE that failed, but, according to tradition, Ayyub al-Ansari, the standard bearer of the prophet Muhammad, died there, just outside the city walls. Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II believed that he had found Ayyub al-Ansari's remains during the Ottoman siege of Constantinople in 1453 and transformed the spot into a shrine and a Muslim pilgrimage site, which it has remained ever since. The second siege, in 717 CE, far exceeded the first. Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE), faced the might of the Umayyad Caliphate, when a massive force of more than 100,000 soldiers and 1,800 ships gathered before the walls of the city. Leo energetically led the defense, assisted by Bulgarian troops from the west and a pitilessly cold winter. The Arab cause appeared to receive new life in the spring of 718 CE, with the arrival of reinforcements by land and sea, but their hopes soon vanished. The newly arrived fleet, manned by Christian Egyptians, deserted to the Byzantine side, and the emperor arranged an ambush of the reinforcements coming by land before they reached Constantinople. The Arabs acknowledged defeat. After a 13-month siege, the Arab force evacuated on August 15, which was the feast day of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, the patron saint, and protector of Constantinople. The situation worsened when storms, Byzantine attacks, and volcanic activity in the Aegean Sea destroyed the retreating Arab navy. Leo III was the savior of the empire and had achieved a remarkable victory that had eluded previous emperors. Leo provided a military foundation for political stability, and he would have further battlefield successes against Arab invasions of Anatolia at Nicaea in 726 CE and Akroinon in 740 CE and during the reign of his son and successor, Constantine V (r. 740–775 CE).

The expansion against the Muslim powers is most associated with the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056 CE), founded by Basil I (867–886 CE). During the dynasty's reign, Byzantium extended its borders against the weakening Abbasid Caliphate, restoring control over all of Anatolia and into the Caucasus and northern Syria. In the Mediterranean, Byzantium took Crete and Cyprus from Arab control and strengthened its position in southern Italy.

In the 10th and 11th centuries, Byzantium faced two resurgent powers in the Muslim world, the Fatimids of Egypt in the south and the Seljuq Turks in the east. The

Fatimids represented a powerful Shi'ite political entity. Shi'ite Islam holds that only a descendant of the prophet Muhammad could rule the Muslim world and that leader, or imam, continued the prophetic tradition. Those descendants would thus come through Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, and his wife, Muhammad's only surviving child, Fatima. This group became known as the party of Ali (*Shi'at Ali* in Arabic) or Shi'ite. Since such imams and their religious views undermined the caliph's position, the Sunni leaders sought to eliminate the Shi'a, who developed secret networks and missionary operations that led to the rise of the Fatimids.

The Seljuqs were a Turkish tribe of central Asian nomads who converted to Islam in the 10th century CE and in the 11th century seized control of Iran and Iraq, including Baghdad and the caliphate. The Turks were Sunni and became accepted as legitimate rulers in the *Dar al-Islam*, who respected the caliph and, in turn, received political legitimacy with the title of sultan. The arrival of Seljuq power in southwest Asia and the incursion of nomadic Turks in Anatolia in the 11th century began the Islamicization and Turkification of this area, which had been the heartland of the Byzantine Empire.

The efforts of the Comnenus Dynasty (r. 1081–1185) challenged Turkish control of Anatolia but lost ground after the conquest of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade (1204). Mongols eliminated the Seljuq sultanate in the 13th century, and a new Muslim and Turkish tribe emerged as the dominant regional power: the Ottomans. Ottoman power advanced steadily in Anatolia and the Balkans in the 14th and 15th centuries, at the expense of Byzantium and the Slavic kingdoms, and culminated with the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmet II in 1453, bringing the end to the Byzantine Empire and fulfilling Muslim efforts to take the city that began in the 7th century CE.

Much of the contact between Byzantium and the Muslim world was hostile, but this is not the complete picture. There were also cultural exchanges between Constantinople and Damascus and Baghdad in the 8th and 9th centuries CE and regular alliances between Byzantium and various Muslim kingdoms. Despite this prolonged contact, the Byzantine understanding of Islam was notably limited, though anti-Muslim literature was popular. In the 8th century CE, the important monastic theologian John of Damascus wrote his *On Heresies* and *Dialogue between a Christian and Saracen*, which Islam viewed as a Christian heresy, originating from a heretical monk who influenced Muhammad. Theodore Abu-Qurra wrote subsequent texts in the 8th century CE and Niketas of Byzantium in the 9th century CE and the genre witnessed resurgence at the end of the empire. Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus (1346–1354) wrote four books against Islam as well as defenses of Christianity aimed at (though not read by) Muslims. Emperor Manuel II (1391–1425) wrote an anti-Muslim dialogue, which echoed throughout the Muslim world when it was controversially cited in the 21st century by Pope Benedict XVI (2005–2013). It is at least worth noting that the archbishop of Thessalonica, Gregory Palamas, a contemporary of Emperor John VI, was held captive by the Ottomans and traveled through much of their territory. There, he noted, much to his surprise, the absence of any persecution. Despite the theological vitriol, the early Ottoman Empire was

particularly notable for its religious tolerance, which was far greater than that of Byzantium.

Let us consider two final points in the interaction between Christianity and Islam. First, Iconoclasm. This theological controversy began with the Syrian or Isaurian Dynasty (717–802 CE), which held to the idea that religious images, or icons, were violations of the Bible's second commandment against "graven images," believing that this religious error caused the imperial defeats of the seventh century CE. The dynasty initiated the period of Iconoclasm ("icon breaking"), when the emperors sought to root out and destroy *religious* images, legalizing only imperial images, which differentiated Byzantine Iconoclasm from Islam, which prohibited all pictorial images, sacred or profane. The dynasty successfully held firm against Balkan and Anatolian challenges but ran out of heirs by the end of the eighth century CE. A new dynasty revived Iconoclasm in the ninth century CE, after a string of Byzantine defeats, but the controversy finally ended in 842 CE. Henceforth, emperors and the church agreed that icons were an essential component of Orthodox religious life and worship. This period is often portrayed as the influence of Islam, but this was not the case. There had long existed minority voices in the Christian tradition that rejected images, expressing the same concern for the biblical injunction against "graven images." In the eighth century CE, two bishops as well as Emperor Leo III the Isaurian (r. 717–741 CE) championed this opinion. Sources hostile to Leo, and to Iconoclasm, disregarded the fact that such a view existed within the Christian tradition and, instead, attributed this to Muslim and Jewish influence, but this was merely invective. Monk and theologian John of Damascus, mentioned previously, may have criticized Islam, but he was equally an opponent of Iconoclasm. Ironically, John of Damascus benefited from living under Muslim rule because he remained safely beyond the reach of the Byzantine emperor while writing his theological works as a subject of the Umayyad Caliphate.

The second and final point is on religious warfare. While jihad is not one of the "five pillars" of Islam, which are the profession of faith (*shahada*), prayer five times per day, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, almsgiving, and pilgrimage (*Hajj*), the Muslim obligation for the defense of the *Dar al-Islam* was a well-established tradition from the days of Muhammad. This struggle, or jihad, was also incentivized by rewards, both honorific and material in this life as well as heavenly and sensual in the afterlife. Thus, religious obligation and justification infused such state violence. In the 11th century, Latin Christendom arrived at a parallel, though not identical, cultural phenomenon, known as the Crusades. Byzantium, which was caught between the two, held fast to a more ambivalent connection between warfare and holiness. Byzantines viewed the religious motivations of the Crusaders with suspicion. This was quite understandable, since Normans, who became Crusaders, had already invaded the Byzantine Empire in the decade preceding the First Crusade. Each passing Crusade increased tension between Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, and in 1204 Catholic Crusaders sacked Orthodox Constantinople on the Fourth Crusade. Holiness and violence wreaked havoc on the empire, from both west and east. In contrast, Byzantium was willing to ally with pagan, Muslim (Shi'ite or Sunni), Catholic, and Orthodox political entities to achieve its political ends. It viewed warfare as a necessary

means to protect the interests of the empire, which sought to operate in line with the correct theology and morality of God, but such warfare on the state's behalf did not lead to sainthood or to sensual pleasure in the afterlife.

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See also: *Individuals*: Leo III, the Isaurian; *Groups and Organizations*: Bulgars; Normans; Slavs; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; Iconoclastic Controversy; *Key Places*: Bulgaria; Byzantium; Egypt

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Nestorians

Nestorian Christianity is practiced by the religious community that originated in the fifth century CE with the teachings of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople from 428 CE until his deposition in Ephesus by the Third Ecumenical Council in 431 CE. The condemnation was the result of Nestorius's theological stance on the natures of Christ, seemingly dividing the Christian savior into distinct and distinguishable natures, one human and one divine.

Nestorius was a Syrian who, like his fellow countryman John Chrysostom before, was recruited from Antioch to become the bishop of Constantinople, during the reign of Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE). Nestorius zealously opposed non-Christians in the city as well as Christians who did not embrace the theology of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, namely, Arian Christians. Nestorius's theology was rooted in the teachings of another Antiochene theologian, Theodore of Mopsuestia, who affirmed the humanity of Christ, alongside Christ's divinity, emphasizing that salvation was possible only because of Christ's *human* experience, as the Second Adam. Theodore focused attention on these two aspects, or natures, of Christ, the human and the divine. Theodore died in 428 CE, and Nestorius became the most influential expression of his theological ideas. Theodore wrote extensively, but the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople condemned his writing in 553 CE. Theodore was posthumously blamed for being the source of Nestorius's ideas, and thus the origin of the heresy that became known as Nestorianism. Both Theodore's actual connection to this theological position and even Nestorius's for that matter remain a topic of some controversy among scholars.

The controversy began in Constantinople when some of Nestorius's followers started using the term "Christotokos" ("Bearer of Christ") when referring to the Virgin Mary, in place of "Theotokos" ("Bearer of God"). While this did not originate with

The Church of Saint Mary at Ephesus was the location for the Third Ecumenical Council in 431 CE, which saw the condemnation of Nestorius. He and his followers, called Nestorians, believed that Jesus Christ's two natures—divine and human—remained separated. They also refused to title the Virgin Mary as *Theotokos* ("God-bearer"). (Angel Yordanov/Dreamstime.com)

Nestorius, the bishop did not condemn it. For Nestorius, Christ was one person but with two separate natures, one human and one divine, yet the theological language was easily misunderstood, particularly in an already heated theological environment. Accusations of heresy were quick to be made. These were tinged with competition between ecclesiastical competitors and fueled by rivalry among the greatest bishoprics of the empire: Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria.

This heretical accusation was the beginning of the Christological Controversy, which would continue to plague the church for several centuries and that created a permanent division because of doctrinal differences over the natures of Christ. This Christological Controversy was the central theological question at the Third (431 CE, Ephesus), Fourth (451 CE, Chalcedon), Fifth (553 CE, Constantinople), and Sixth (680 CE, Constantinople) Ecumenical Councils, and was even related to condemnations of Iconoclasm at the Eighth Council of Nicaea in 787 CE.

At Ephesus, Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (412–444 CE) led the attack, accusing Nestorius of calling for two Christs, which Nestorius had not done. Cyril was the nephew and successor of Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria (384–412 CE), who had orchestrated the deposition of another bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, in 404 CE. In 430 CE, Bishop Celestine of Rome condemned the two-person view, despite protests by Nestorius that the condemned view was not what he had been presenting. An Ecumenical Council was called to resolve this, meeting at Ephesus in 431 CE. At this Third Ecumenical Council, Cyril dominated proceedings from start to finish, and the verdict was certain even before the start. Nestorius understood that there would be no theological discussion and no fair hearing; his fate was sealed. And so, he resigned his patriarchate and departed for a monastery near Antioch. The council again condemned the position that Christ had two persons, attributing it to Nestorius, denouncing him as well. That the council had acted in error by condemning a theological position and incorrectly attributing that position to Nestorius was already apparent in the fifth century CE, when the ecclesiastical historian Socrates stated as such, shortly after the council's proceedings.

Nestorius stayed near Antioch for five years but was exiled to Egypt in 436 CE. There, like John Chrysostom before, he would be moved about and treated poorly. He was also able to stay in contact with friends and allies, through whom he learned of the two-nature decree of Bishop Leo of Rome (440–461 CE), known as the "Tome of Leo," and the approaching Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon. The latter council would proclaim two natures in one person in Christ, which Nestorius would have accepted. There was the possibility for restoration of Nestorius's position as long as he would admit the error in not embracing Theotokos. Before this could happen, however, Nestorius died and remained anathematized.

This anathema created a permanent divide between the Christian Church in the Roman Empire and the church in Persia, which embraced Nestorian Christianity and the theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia. This church welcomed those fleeing persecution from the Roman Empire and continued to spread Nestorian Christian communities far afield into central Asia, India, and China.

Persia welcomed Christians who continued to believe in the teachings of Nestorius, where they developed an ecclesiastical structure independent of the bishops of the

Roman Empire. These churches continued after the seventh-century CE Muslim conquest and the Nestorian Christians became active in trade on the Silk Road, which connected both ends of Eurasia. Thus, there were Nestorian bishops at Nishapur in Iran, in Merv in Turkmenistan, Herat in Afghanistan, at Bukhara and Samarkand in central Asia, in Sri Lanka and Malabar in south Asia, and at Chang'an, capital of China's T'ang Dynasty. In the later eighth century CE, Bishop Adam of Chang'an commissioned an extant memorial stone in Syriac and Mandarin that commemorated the arrival of Nestorian missionaries from Iraq in 635 CE.

With the emergence of Baghdad as the new capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in the eighth century CE, the head of the Nestorian Church, which became known as the "Church of the East," was located there. These Nestorian Christians played an essential role in the transference of the classical inheritance to Muslim intellectuals, helping in the translation process from Greek (or Syriac) to Arabic.

In the post-Abbasid period, the fortunes of the Nestorian church waned significantly, suffering blows from less tolerant Muslim rulers and then in the modern era from nationalists of various faiths and from religious zealots, who viewed Nestorian Christians as enemies.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; Patriarchs; *Individuals*: Chrysostom, John; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; Persians; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; Iconoclastic Controversy; Nicaea, Council of; Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; *Key Places*: Antioch; Byzantium

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Normans

In the 11th and 12th centuries, the Normans served both as powerful, if unreliable, mercenaries for Byzantium and, at the same time, as one of the empire's greatest threats.

Norman history begins with Viking raids on west Frankish domains. In the early 10th century CE, a Viking leader named Rollo seized territory and, in return for recognition of his right to rule there as duke, agreed to accept the Frankish king, Charles

This section from the Bayeux Tapestry shows the Battle of Hastings (1066), the final event of the Norman conquest of Britain. The Normans, who held land in France but were Norse in origin, also traveled to the Byzantine Empire, where they served as mercenaries and formed the Varangian Guard. They were also often the enemies of the Byzantine Empire, particularly in the 11th and 12th centuries. (Universal History Archive/Getty Images)

the Simple, as his suzerain. Rollo settled with his "Northmen" in the area that still bears their name: Normandy. Under Norman rule, the region developed as a model of highly effective medieval government, making Normandy one of the most powerful duchies in Western Europe by the 11th century. The Normans also manifested a zeal for monastic patronage, whose estates were also required to support obligations of military service. To ensure harmony between secular and religious authority, the duke of Normandy exercised the right of approval for all high-level clerics in his territory. It was the combination of these factors, coupled with competition for land and resources within Normandy, that inspired Norman soldiers to spill out across Europe, conquering England in 1066 and serving as mercenaries wherever funds were available to hire these highly esteemed warriors. These Norman mercenaries exploited the weaknesses of their employers and often sought to carve out their domains.

Norman mercenaries began working for principalities in southern Italy in the early 11th century. The peninsula was fragmented between Byzantine domains in the south, various independent Lombard territories, and lands ruled by the bishop of Rome that stretched across central Italy. The Normans began working as mercenaries in the region, regularly switching sides as situation or salary suited them. The papacy supported a pro-Byzantine policy against the growing Norman presence in the south, which might threaten papal territory. This policy failed when the Normans confronted and defeated a papal army at Civitate in 1053, capturing Pope Leo IX (1049–1054). While the pope was in Norman custody, his legates were in Constantinople and came

into theological conflict with the strong-willed patriarch, Michael Cerularius (1043–1059), who excommunicated the envoys and received as much back from them. This unfortunate decision started the Schism of 1054, out of which emerged separate Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

In the aftermath of Civitate, the papacy reversed its Norman policy. Viewing the Normans as allies, the pope recognized the Norman leader Robert Guiscard as the legitimate duke of southern Italy (Apulia and Calabria) and Sicily (1059–1085), authorizing his conquest and control of these regions. And so, the Normans and Byzantines had conflicting interests in Italy and the pope had switched sides. At the same time, the Byzantine Empire had been recruiting Norman mercenaries to stem the Turkish danger in Anatolia. Norman demands against Byzantium naturally followed their effectiveness on the battlefield against the empire's foes. In 1057, one such Norman commander, Herve, rebelled. His rebellion was cut short, not by Byzantines, but by a Seljuq victory against him.

In 1071, Robert Guiscard and his Normans conquered Bari, the last Byzantine possession in Italy. In the same year, at the other end of the empire, in late summer, Seljuq Sultan Alp Arslan (1063–1072) defeated the Byzantine army at Manzikert, capturing Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes (1068–1071) and opening Anatolia to Turkish incursions, marking the beginning of the Turkification of Anatolia. A civil war (1071–1072) following the defeat, a three-year rebellion by Russell Baillieul, another Norman mercenary commander, and then the second civil war of the decade (1077–1081) further weakened Byzantium. It was in this anarchic period that Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) became emperor in 1081, inheriting an empire in the greatest peril.

Seeing his opportunity, Duke Robert Guiscard launched his invasion in 1081. Robert claimed to act on behalf of deposed Emperor Michael VII (r. 1071–1078), whose son had been engaged to Robert's daughter. Scrambling to meet this challenge, Alexius recruited a new army, composed of any available manpower, including Turkish mercenaries and even heretics from the Balkans. He also appealed to Venice, granting tax exemptions for trade and docks in the Golden Horn of Constantinople in return for naval support. Venice secured the sea, but Alexius still suffered multiple defeats on land. Byzantine diplomacy fomented a rebellion in Italy and a German invasion against the Norman-allied papacy, which required Robert's return. In the Balkans, the Duke's son, Bohemond, pressed on. Alexius finally scored a victory over the Normans in 1083, forcing Bohemond to abandon the invasion and return to Italy. Robert began a second invasion in 1084 but died in 1085, affording a much-needed reprieve for the empire.

After the emperor had stabilized the Norman challenge, he turned his attention to the east, where various Turkish principalities then dominated Anatolia, and in 1095 asked Pope Urban II (1088–1099) to help him recruit western troops. Pope Urban welcomed the idea of a Christian force battling the might of Islam but envisioned this not as a limited undertaking to help the Byzantine Empire recover lost territory, but as a pilgrimage of arms to restore the Holy Land to Christian control, which was not what

Alexius had intended. Thus, the First Crusade was born. Before they reached the Holy Land, the Crusaders had to pass through the Balkans, Constantinople, and then, Anatolia. In summer 1096, the first Western force reached the capital, having left a trail of violence en route. In fall 1096 and winter 1097, large Crusader contingents arrived, with some 30,000 foot and 5,000 cavalry, guided through the Balkans by Byzantine military escorts to minimize disturbances to imperial subjects. Despite this precaution and because of delays in the arrival of provisions, which the empire furnished, some Crusaders turned to pillage. The already tense situation was compounded by the fact that among the Crusader leaders was Robert Guiscard's son, Bohemond, who had already waged war against the very same emperor. In Constantinople, Alexius required Crusader commanders to swear an oath to return all formerly conquered Byzantine land. There was tension over the request and over cultural differences between Byzantine and Latin Christian culture, but Alexius, much to his credit, effectively managed the situation.

In 1097, the Crusaders conquered Antioch, but then faced a major Turkish counterattack and appealed to the emperor for help. Sensing their inevitable defeat, Alexius did not answer the call. Yet, the Crusaders managed to overcome the odds and best their Turkish besiegers. Alexius's unwillingness to assist strained relations between the empire and the Crusaders. Relations became further strained when Bohemond became the ruler of Antioch. As before, his eye and aim remained on Constantinople. In 1107, Bohemond launched a new invasion of Byzantium from Italy, besieging Dyrrachium on the Adriatic coast. Alexius defeated the Norman and received an oath of allegiance from him, but Bohemond's nephew Tancred held Antioch and refused to return it to the empire.

Alexius assessed that his greatest threat was not Turkish, but Crusader. His foreign policy required regular negotiation and alliance with rulers of newly founded Crusader states, while also looking elsewhere for additional support. He allied with the Hungarians and married his son and heir, John Comnenus, to a Hungarian princess named Prioska, who received a more preferable Greek name, Irene.

Alexius's son and successor, John Comnenus (1118–1143), continued the defense of Byzantium against Norman threats, allying with Germans and Hungarians. The Norman threat loomed over John's son and successor, Manuel (1143–1180), who allied with the Venetians and German Emperor Conrad III (1138–1152) to launch an assault on Norman territory. In 1149, the first Byzantine action occurred on the Adriatic island of Corcyra and was successful. Manuel's goal was to cross into Italy, but a Serb rebellion in the Balkans, instigated by Norman ruler Roger II (1130–1154), distracted him. Manuel remained committed to the conquest of the Norman domains in Italy, but the Venetian anti-Norman support grew increasingly lukewarm, as they were wary of Byzantine control of both coasts of the Adriatic Sea, which might threaten their own position. Still, before the German-Byzantine invasion could be implemented, Conrad III died, followed by Roger II not long after. Roger's son, William, pursued peace with the emperor, but Manuel refused, continuing his anti-Norman alliance with German emperor Frederick I Barbarossa. In 1155, Manuel's forces finally landed in Italy, but no German support was forthcoming, and William successfully rallied in defense of his kingdom. By 1156, the attempted Byzantine reconquest had failed.

With Manuel's death in 1180, internal tensions and the dictatorial rule of the last emperor of the Comnenus Dynasty, Andronicus I (r. 1183–1185), significantly weakened the Byzantine Empire. William II (1166–1189), son of William I, used these Byzantine problems to his advantage, launching a full-scale invasion, while the empire could offer little defense. In 1185, William sacked the great city of Thessalonica. After this terrible defeat, the violent overthrow of Andronicus followed, and the new emperor, Isaac II Angelus, founder of the short-lived and fateful Angelid Dynasty (1185–1204), sent Alexius Branas, one of the few able generals of the era, to stop the Normans, which he did with great success. The Normans were utterly defeated, but Branas's success and popularity led to his proclamation as emperor and then to his murder.

The Norman threat waned only after the German Hohenstauffen family married into the Norman ruling house. By the 13th century, German kings ruled in place of the Normans, creating another new challenge for the empire.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Government and Politics*: Eastern Orthodox Church; Patriarchs; *Individuals*: Comnena, Anna; Comnenus, Alexius I; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Great Schism

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Persians

The Persian Empire was the eastern neighbor of the Roman Empire. In the year 53 BCE, a Roman politician and commander named Crassus, aspiring to be another Alexander the Great, led a massive Roman army to subdue Persia. At Carrhae, along the border region of the two empires, a Persian army, led by the cavalry of the Parthian Dynasty (247 BCE–224 CE), overwhelmed Crassus and his legions. The Roman

infantrymen were ill-equipped to face an army of expert riders and archers. The Parthians were an eastern-Iranian, nomadic people who conquered and ruled Persia, but they were hardly an aggressive neighbor; this Roman defeat stemmed from Roman aggression. This situation changed significantly in the third century CE when the Parthians were overthrown by a Persian family from the region of Fars in modern-day Iran. This brought the Sassanid family to power. Founded by Shah ("King") Ardeshir (224–242 CE), the Sassanian Dynasty (224–651 CE) created a more powerful empire and posed a much greater threat to Rome.

With its capital at Ctesiphon on the Tigris River, near ancient Babylon and a short distance from present-day Baghdad in Iraq, the Sassanid Empire benefited from its location on the Silk Road with trade passing through it between central Asia and the Byzantine Empire. Sassanian Persia stretched from Mesopotamia to present-day Afghanistan, where it displaced the Kushan Empire, which increased its control over trade routes. The Sassanians also fostered agricultural prosperity and utilized aqueduct and irrigation systems known as qanats, which moved water underground over vast distances. Some of these qanat systems are still in use today. Against their western rival, Sassanid rulers, like Shah Shapur I (240–270 CE), adopted an aggressive strategy, which contributed much to Rome's "Crisis of the Third Century." Shapur defeated Roman armies on multiple occasions, even killing and capturing Roman emperors. In the fourth century CE, Emperor Julian (r. 361–363 CE) set out to deal a decisive blow to Persia, like another Alexander, invading with a force of more than 60,000. Initially victorious, he advanced to the Persian capital, Ctesiphon. Realizing that he could not storm this well-defended city, Julian shifted his army north but was wounded in the battle and died on June 26, 363 CE.

As with Christianity in the Roman Empire after Constantine, Zoroastrianism served as the state religion of the Sassanid Dynasty. In his period, Zoroastrian religious texts were collected together, called the Avesta, in the format that Zoroastrian scriptures exist today. Zoroastrianism merged with the empire's political ideology on Sassanid coins and its art. An example of this can be seen on the great rock art at Naqsh-e Rostam, which depicts Shah Ardeshir on horseback, trampling his Parthian predecessor, and receiving his authority from the hands of God, that is, Ahura Mazda. A crucial Zoroastrian leader in the third century CE was Kartir, who championed the effort to promote Zoroastrianism and to curtail all other religious movements that might threaten its supremacy, including the message of a Persian spiritual leader named Mani, whose ideas incorporated elements from a range of religious traditions. Mani taught a dualistic faith, of good and evil, matter and spirit, and a path to purity and salvation. Although imprisoned, his ideas, known as Manichaeism, spread from Persia west to the Roman Empire and into central Asia and even China.

Persia generally tolerated Christians, with periods of persecution, which provoked diplomatic and military intervention by Rome, but they also welcomed Christians persecuted in the Roman Empire because of dissenting theologies, including Nestorian Christians, who followed the teachings of Patriarch Nestorius, condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council (at Ephesus) in 431 CE. From Persia, Nestorian

Christianity spread along trade routes south to Arabia and east to India and across central Asia to China.

One area of frequent conflict between Rome and Persia was the Caucasus, where both empires challenged for control of the strategically located region, which lay between them. The Armenians, one of the indigenous peoples within this diverse region, had a distinct language and culture but were also influenced by both the Persian and Roman Empires. The Armenian Kingdom was ruled by the Arsacid Dynasty, which was a branch of a Parthian family that had ruled Persia before the Sassanians. They adopted Christianity under King Trdat, who converted shortly before the conversion of Emperor Constantine in the Roman Empire. Shapur II (309–379 CE) invaded Armenia, which the two realms eventually divided. Persia viewed the Christianization of the Caucasus as a threat to its position. In the fifth century CE, the Persians sought to sever this religious link between Armenian and Rome by trying to force a Zoroastrian ascendancy. The Armenians rallied around their Christian tradition, and their independence and the Persian effort failed.

In the fifth century CE, Persia endured internal unrest and upheaval stemming from social inequity and hardship that was set aflame by a religious reformer named Mazdak, who called for the redistribution of land and property. One shah, Kavad I (488–496, 498–531 CE), was won over but was soon deposed. He fled to the central Asian steppe, where he found support and the forces needed to return to power. Kavad's successor was Khusro I (531–579 CE), during whose reign Sassanian power reached its zenith. Khusro reformed the state's tax structure and bureaucracy, which was managed by a prime minister, ensuring greater direct imperial control. He invested in many infrastructure projects and also increased central control over the military, which he wielded against the Huns and the Byzantine Empire. With this enhanced army, Khusro broke the Byzantine-Persian treaty of 532 CE that he had made with Emperor Justinian and invaded the empire in 540 CE, taking advantage of Justinian's focus on western campaigns. A 50-year peace treaty was finally established in 561 CE, though it would last only through Justinian's reign. Khusro was also a patron of the arts, sponsoring the collection of texts from India and welcoming pagan philosophers persecuted by his rival, Justinian. Culture flourished during his reign, and many important Persian literary texts are thought to stem from this period, though it is not certain. Around this time, the game of chess made its way from India to Persia and backgammon from Persia to India. Khusro remains the most famous monarch in the dynasty's history and earned the epithet "Anoshirvan" ("the Immortal Soul"), by which he is traditionally known. Though the Sassanians were Zoroastrian, Khusro was remembered as a model of justice even by later Muslim rulers of Persia.

Just as the nomadic peoples, notably the Huns, moving from the steppe region around the Black Sea and into southeastern and Western Europe threatened the Romans, nomadic incursions either via the Caucasus or from the more exposed eastern frontier that bordered central Asia itself threatened the Persians too. In the fifth and sixth centuries CE, the Persians spent much effort and expense on defense against the nomads, sometimes allying with Byzantium in joint efforts. But for Persia, the end came not from the east, but the south.

In the late sixth century CE, Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE) assisted Khusro II (591–628 CE) in regaining his throne in Ctesiphon, which he had lost in 590 CE. This action led to peace between the empires in 591 CE. In 602 CE, however, when Phocas (r. 602–610 CE) overthrew and killed Maurice, this became a pretext for invasion, ostensibly to restore one of Maurice's sons to the throne. To stop the attack, Phocas drained the Balkans of troops, which benefited Avar and Slav inroads there, to shift all forces to the eastern front. Still, Khusro's armies took the important frontier city of Dara and advanced into Mesopotamia and Armenia, defeating Byzantine armies along the way. Phocas's support plummeted. In North Africa, which supplied grain to Constantinople, Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), the exarch of Carthage, who was too distant for Phocas to threaten, rebelled and shut off the city's food supply. He sent his nephew Nicetas to secure control of Egypt. In 609 CE, Phocas ordered his governor of Syria to withdraw troops from the Persian campaign to maintain control of Egypt, which also provided grain for the capital. This effort also failed, and the attempted defense of Egypt was made at the expense of Anatolia and Syria, which fell into Persian hands.

Once Heraclius secured Egypt, the exarch's son, who was also named Heraclius, set sail for the capital, arriving at Constantinople in October 610 CE. Phocas found himself in nearly the identical situation as that of Maurice in 602 CE, only this time, Phocas was inside the city's walls. With a hostile force outside and few troops available, he called on the Greens and Blues to man the defenses, but the Greens opened the harbor to Heraclius's fleet. Turmoil ensued, with the circus factions battling one another, while Heraclius secured control. Phocas was arrested and executed, but before order could be restored the Persians advanced, taking Damascus and then Jerusalem and carrying off a relic of the true cross, the city's bishop, and thousands of Christians into captivity in Persia.

In 622 CE, Heraclius's counteroffensive began. He focused on the Caucasus and a new strategic alliance with the Khazars, a nomadic Turkic people from the steppe region north of the Black and Caspian Seas. Khazar attacks on Persian territory greatly helped the Byzantine cause. In 626 CE, another Turkic people, the Avars, who dominated the Balkans, collaborated with the Persians for a joint assault on the capital. This proved futile, since the Avars were unable to overcome the city's massive walls, while the Byzantine navy easily defeated the Slavic fleet, preventing the transfer of Persian forces gathered on the city's Asian side to the Avar force on the European side. The Byzantines, with their Khazar allies, achieved final victory in the prolonged conflict. Persian resistance collapsed by 628 CE, and Khusro II was deposed and executed, creating a vacuum in leadership until Yazdegerd III (632–651 CE), who reigned over a ruined empire.

During the long war between the Byzantines and Persians, both empires, aware of the problem of desert raiders, had used their wealth to gain the support of Arab tribes as an armed border patrol. Now, as a cost-saving measure, with both empires weakened and bankrupted, they both terminated the imperial subsidies. They could not possibly know that while the great war was waging, Islam was making its first appearance in the oasis town of Mecca in Arabia. By 630 CE, the year of Muhammad's death,

Arabian tribal unity had been achieved, and the invasions of Persia and the Byzantine Empire would begin shortly after that.

Matthew T. Herbst

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Heraclius; Julian the Apostate; Justinian; Maurice; Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople; Phocas; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Khazars; Muslims; Nestorians; *Key Places*: Byzantium; Egypt

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Political Parties

In the early Byzantine Empire, political life was closely related to sports and entertainment. Two main political parties were sports associations that gained the most support in the society, and more specifically in the city of Constantinople. The Blues and the Greens were named for the colors of the chariot drivers' costumes (thus, "Veneti," or "Blues," and "Prasinoi," or "Greens"), representing opposing teams of chariot racers. These two groups dominated the sporting culture both inside and outside the arena. Although there were other teams (Gold, Red, White, and Purple), they were of little political consequence.

The Hippodrome was both the main place for social gathering and the sporting center in Constantinople, hosting the chariot and horse races. The Byzantine Empire, as earlier in ancient Rome, had well-developed associations or circus parties, also known as demes, that supported different teams under sporting competitions. The team associations were a strong focus for many political and social issues among the Byzantine community. Originally exclusively sporting organizations, they started acquiring a different, political role when Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) issued a decree on acclamations. This act granted the right of the urban population to express its opinion and to vocally approve or disapprove government resolutions read in the circus. This is when, near the end of the fourth century, they became distinctive as political parties with specific social inclination.

The society divided into what we would call a right- and left-wing system of politics. The bureaucratic nobility led the Veneti; they supported centralization, bureaucratic administration, and Orthodoxy. The Prasinoi led the upper layers of the commercial and artisan population and backed a strengthening of the organs of local self-government. Besides, they demonstrated sympathies for the Monophysites. From the beginning of the fifth century, both the Blues and the Greens were included in the defense forces of the capital, and each had to provide a specific number of armed men. Because of this they could form their own urban militia and take part in local self-government. There were also situations when the government deprived one of the parties of these rights.

In various situations these factions were main actors in violent episodes. These disturbances varied and included everything from profanity to violence. Nevertheless, in some occasions they were successful in transmitting the opinions and will of the people, inciting the emperor to act. The emperor's response depended on each case. Sometimes he would comply with the factions' petitions; sometimes he would take severe measures against them while citizens gathered to support the factions.

In the late fifth century and the sixth century, the confrontation between the Blues and the Greens intensified. Their military units composed of young men called *stasiotoi* became especially aggressive to the point that they engaged in open warfare against their superiors. Severe social divisions provoked ordinary members of the political parties to unite against their leaders, to stop obeying them, and finally to advance against the imperial authority and the government.

Probably the most distinctive riot of this type and one of the bloodiest events in the history of Constantinople is the Nika Revolt, which took place in 532 CE during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE). It was a period when Byzantine government became extremely bureaucratic and corrupt. Justinian with his reforms attempted to root out the corruption, but these measures were not welcomed by both parties on each side. This endeavor to reform contributed to the political unrest that erupted in the Hippodrome and violence that spread throughout the city. During the five days of rioting, fires broke out and famous structures and buildings were destroyed, including the city's foremost church, Hagia Sophia. In the course of the riots, thousands of people were killed.

Toward the eighth century, the Veneti and the Prasinoi lost their political significance and their role was limited to the participation of their representatives in solemn holiday celebrations.

However, in the late Byzantine period in the coastal city of Thessalonica, two more powerful organized groups and political parties emerged to replace them: the Zealots and the sailors. The civil war led by the Zealots brought to power a new form of government in the city in the period 1342–1349.

In the time of Michael VIII Palaeologus (r. 1259–1282), Zealots were members of a faction that largely included monks and members of the lower clerical orders. They had a profound influence on the Byzantine people, probably because of their anti-aristocratic orientation. As a radical group, the original Zealots also disapproved of the imperial policy, especially over the question of the union of the churches. When the civil war began in 1342, the Zealots in Thessalonica already had a certain number

of supporters with a specific political position. The group's strength increased, and until 1346 it was considerable. By the time the Zealots were consolidating their dominance, the faction's representatives held important posts in the community bodies, and thus played a direct part in the exercise of revolutionary rule over the city.

The other group that participated and played an active part in the events in Thessalonica was that of the sailors, who on occasion also collaborated with the Zealots as a strike force. Although a guild, the sailors were headed by a member of the house of Palaeologus. They were regulated by and directly dependent on the central government in Constantinople. It was a military association set up by Michael VIII Palaeologus (r. 1259–1282) for military, national, and social reasons, primarily with the aim to control.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Demes; *Venationes*; *Key Events*: Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Praetorian Guard

The Praetorian Guard (in Latin, *cohors praetorian*), a special unit of elite Roman troops, served as the imperial bodyguard. In the second century BCE, as the Roman Republic went into decline, Roman troops began to develop an allegiance to the general who led and paid them, such as Pompey Magnus and Julius Caesar, rather than to the state. In this climate, the *cohors praetoria* developed as the personal bodyguards of such generals. In 27 BCE, Augustus (r. 27 BCE–14 CE), the first emperor, created an imperial guard comprising nine cohorts of elite troops who were stationed in and around Rome to protect both the emperor and the city. This Praetorian Guard constituted one of the most prestigious military units in the ancient world. In 2 BCE, Augustus divided command of the Praetorian Guard between two equestrian prefects, but his successor, Tiberius (r. 14–37 CE), named his trusted lieutenant, Sejanus (20 BCE–31 CE), sole prefect in 23 CE. Thanks to his control of the guard, which he concentrated in fortified barracks just outside the city, Sejanus became a powerful political figure whose growing ambition caused the emperor to order his destruction in 31 CE.

As the career of Sejanus indicated, the Praetorian Guard could be a powerful political force, and, over time, the unit increasingly interfered in the imperial succession.

In 37 CE, the Guard assassinated Caligula (r. 37–41 CE) and, through their support, ensured the succession of his uncle Claudius (r. 41–54 CE) to the imperial throne. The Praetorian Guard was also a key player in the disorders that followed the death of Nero (r. 54–68 CE) in 68 CE. During the following year, the Guard appointed and deposed a series of emperors, causing 69 CE to become known as "the Year of the Four Emperors." Other emperors murdered by the Praetorian Guard included Pertinax (193 CE), Elagabalus (222 CE), and Balbinus and Maximus (238 CE). In 193 CE, when Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE) won the throne after another period of disorder, he tried to depoliticize the Guard by filling its ranks with men recruited from the legions. However, the Guard continued to be a force in the third century CE until it was finally disbanded by Constantine the Great in 312 CE.

The Praetorian Guard first appeared during the time of the Roman Republic. During that period, their purpose was to protect the generals of the Roman army while serving in the field army. A Roman general at that time was called a praetor, and his headquarters in the field a praetorium or military camp. As a result, the praetor's bodyguards became known as the Praetorian Guards. Scholars agree that Scipio Africanus, a famous general in the Second Punic War (218–202 BCE), conqueror of the famous Carthaginian general Hannibal, and later consul, first formed this unit of bodyguards. He selected them from among his best and bravest troops and assigned them their sole duty of guarding him personally, giving them six times their regular army pay.

The Praetorian Guard originated in the Roman Republic as personal guards to high-ranking officers. In the empire, Augustus appointed them as his personal bodyguard. They occasionally were influential in the creation of new emperors. They were finally disbanded by Constantine I after his defeat of Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 CE. (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France/ Leemage/Corbis via Getty Images)

The Republican generals had their own personal bodyguards, but establishment of the Praetorian Guard as an institution was carried out during the reign of Augustus. Because of a tumultuous period of civil war and social crisis, Augustus saw the need to create a body of soldiers who would swear loyalty to his person. Thus, unlike other military units,

the Praetorian Guards would engage in battles or go on campaigns only at the direct order of Augustus. Augustus wanted to maintain some of the values and traditions of the Roman Republic. Therefore, in the beginning, the emperor stationed the Praetorian Guards within the walls of Rome and would not allow them to wear the customary armor. Instead, they wore the civilian toga and were known as the *cohors togata*. They looked like lictors, bodyguards from the Republican era, whose duty was to protect magistrates, particularly consuls (magistrates whose functions were to pass laws, command armies, and serve as supreme judges in the city of Rome).

Members of the Guard enjoyed privileges all listed on a diploma signed by the emperor. Their pay was three times higher compared with that of ordinary legionaries and their term of service was shorter, allowing them to attain higher commands at earlier ages. Tax immunity was also among the privileges given by various emperors.

The first task of the Praetorian Guards was to protect the emperor directly, but they also defended their patron and his interests indirectly by functioning as a kind of secret police force. So, the Praetorian Guards engaged in espionage, frightening, and arrests, and even prepared and performed executions of those judged to be a possible threat to the emperor. Sometimes they would disguise themselves as ordinary citizens and attend public gatherings to monitor and act against anyone who criticized the emperor. In other occasions, when not concealed, the Praetorian Guards would be used for crowd control. At times, the Praetorian Guards would also participate in games. In 52 CE, Emperor Claudius hosted a staged sea battle (*naumachia*) on Fucine Lake (Italy), and that spectacle involved the Praetorian Guards as well.

Emperor Claudius owed his throne to a certain extent to the Praetorian Guards. Claudius's predecessor, Caligula (37–41 CE), was assassinated, and the man who supposedly played the central role in this action was a tribune of a cohort of the Praetorian Guard. Caligula's assassination may have been the first time the Praetorian Guards took part in an emperor's murder, but certainly, it was not the last. In the following decades, emperors murdered by the Praetorian Guard included Galba (96–98 CE), Commodus (180–192 CE), Caracalla (198–217 CE), and Elagabalus (218–222 CE). Thus, the Praetorian Guards were partially able to decide the rulers of the empire. In the early fourth century CE, however, by supporting Maxentius's claim to the Roman throne, they made an imprudent move.

In 312 CE, Maxentius and his Praetorian Guards fought against Constantine the Great (306–337 CE) at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. In the battle, Maxentius was killed, and the Praetorian Guards defeated. Constantine then disbanded the unit, and its remaining members reassigned to the frontiers of the empire. This decision ended their political power and influence in Rome and their role as the emperor's private guards.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Taxes; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Key Events*: Milvian Bridge, Battle of; *Military*: *Scholae Palatinae*; Varangian Guard

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Professional Associations

The professional associations were unions of craftsmen and professionals in the Byzantine cities, under the monitoring of the empire. They slowly evolved from *collegia* that existed in the Roman and early Byzantine periods. Their main functions were to promote and protect their professional and financial interests, and to transmit practical knowledge through apprenticeship. Sometimes they even exercised political influence. The associations in the capital were under the direct supervision of the prefect of the city, and the state could control the economy through them.

The recovery of the Byzantine economy in the beginning of the 10th century was strongly reflected in a growing number and flourishing of professional associations in the urban areas. The main source for information concerning these organizations is *The Book of the Eparch*, dated to the period of Emperor Leo VI the Wise's (r. 886–912 CE) rule and when Philotheos was eparch of Constantinople from 911–912 CE. The eparch was the Greek equivalent for the urban prefect. Through rules and decrees, this book provides detailed information on politics of operation and organization of these associations in Constantinople.

The guilds of the capital were under the direct control of the prefect and the employees (*eparchikoi*). The *legatarios*, who supervised and presented foreign tradesmen to the prefect, was his first assistant. Apart from the *legatarios*, the *symponos* controlled weights and measures, and his attorneys' officials, *exarchoi*, were responsible for the seals (*boullotai*) and the control of the quality of thread (*mitotai*).

The professional associations in the 10th century were all constituted and regulated by the same legislation, but still they presented differences and particularities. The operation of the craft guilds represented a mixture of free enterprise and state intervention. Each member was free to invest money, but within the limits that his profession imposed upon him. The state aimed at a healthy competition and neutralization of an illicit one: firstly, it determined specific places to exercise the profession. This allowed prevention of the disintegration of the market, effectiveness to increase, and the expenses of the enterprising activities to remain low. It also impeded professionals from creating monopolies or storing concealed products to put them on sale in periods of crisis. These measures enforced the businessmen of one branch to act collectively when they had to buy imported products. Thus, all professionals gained the same price, and the competition was free.

The individual initiative was determined by the time of buying and disposal of products, the level of investment, and the sale price. The price of sale was restricted,

and the state oversaw the quality of the products and supervised the distribution of the *kekolymena* (luxurious products or those with strategic importance).

The number of professional associations in Constantinople that the *Book of the Eparch* refers to is limited. Still it is obvious that many professionals practiced their economic activities freely, and not all of them belonged to these unions. There were several groups of professions covering different fields of economy and trade. The first on the list were the *taboularioi* or notaries. Following were the associations of professionals directly related to money, among them the silversmiths (*argyropratai*) and the money changers (*trapezitai*). After the professions related to money, there was a branch that dealt with the production and clearance of silk and other types of textiles and clothing. Equally numerous and essential to the life in the city were suppliers of spices, perfumes, and colorings—the *myrepsoi*. The sixth group included professionals who placed in the market products that could be imported illegally: candle makers (*keroularioi*), soap makers (*saponopratai*), and grocers (*saldamarioi*). The next group included the professions that worked with skin, produced leather goods, and tanners. The eighth group included professionals who provided Constantinople with various goods, mainly food suppliers. The last group of professionals included builders, cabinetmakers (*leptourgoi*), lapidaries (*marmararioi*), plaster craftsmen (*gypsoplastai*), door makers (*askothyrarioi*), and dyers (*zografoi*).

Membership in the guilds was not hereditary, as in Rome, but it mainly depended on different references to ensure the personal integrity and professional sufficiency of each candidate. This included payment of registration fees and donation of money to old members. Moreover, the state controlled the registration of the new members.

Obligations for guild members were numerous, such as presence in public events or in assemblies of their guild. There were also numerous prohibitions whose aim was to regulate the market (smuggling, falsification, counterfeiting). Equally strict rules were applied to foreign traders in Constantinople, and restrictions were accompanied by fines and physical punishment.

During the later Byzantine period, the system of Byzantine guilds, especially in Constantinople, gradually fell into disruption and started to be dissolved from the beginning of 13th century onward. This process was the result of the commercial sovereignty of the merchants from Venice and Genoa and the decay of government-owned power. Furthermore, the guilds from certain sectors, such as the silk industry, were in decline because of competition that developed between the capital and the provincial cities.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Guilds; Municipal Administration; Weights; *Groups and Organizations*: *Collegia*

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Secret Societies

Secret societies have existed for centuries, conducting their activities in secrecy and hiding their identities from the public. There have been different types of them, but those that emerged in the Middle Ages are related to Christianity and Islam and cultural, political, and religious circumstances that appeared because of their clash. Among many of them, two stand out. The Templars, monks who expressed their religious devotion through force of arms, and Assassins, the first Islamic military order who fought against Muslims and Christians to spread their doctrine. Additionally, there were the secret tribunals from Germany, Vehmic Court or *Vehmgericht*, organizations that conducted trials and executions during the medieval period.

In 1119, Hughes de Payens founded a military order of monks known as the Templars or Knight Templars, who were so named because their headquarters was at the site of the ancient Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The order sought to blend the religious zeal of monks with the military discipline of soldiers to create a body of troops dedicated to the destruction of Islamic infidels. They were essentially Cistercian monks and warrior knights following the rule of Saint Benedict. After the First Crusade, when Christians recovered the city of Jerusalem, many holy places frequently visited by pilgrims remained in Muslim hands. Therefore, eight French knights, by pledging themselves to the monastic ideals of poverty, chastity, and obedience, joined forces to protect pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. Because of their fierce devotion to their order and their complete freedom from any lay authority, the Templars often flouted the authority of the king of Jerusalem, who charged them with subordinating the interests of the kingdom to the interests of the order. Eventually, the Templars, through management of the revenues of the French king, became a major force in international banking.

Initially, the Order of the Templars possessed few riches and relied mostly on donations. The Catholic Church around 1129 officially recognized the Templars. As more and more Christians supported them, the Templars rapidly grew in numbers and power. Their greatest ally was a prominent church figure, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, nephew of one of the founders of the Knights Templar, and the French abbot responsible for the popularity of the Cistercian order. The Templars were governed by a code

of conduct devised by Bernard de Clairvaux and by the order's founder, Hugues de Payens. Known as the "Latin Rule" and comprising 72 clauses, this code defined all aspects of their lives and the organization of the order. As the association of the Templars grew, Bernard and Hughes added more guidelines, and its final version contained several hundred clauses.

When the Muslims retook Jerusalem, it undermined the foundation of the Templars. It affected their entire reason for existing in the Holy Land. They started losing the support of European nobility. Moreover, additional Crusades were not successful. The Templars continued to lose lands, and after the siege of Acre in 1291, they had to relocate their headquarters to the island of Cyprus. The French king Philip IV, wishing to avoid paying his debt to the Templars, charged them with heresy and other abominations. In 1312, Philip, acting with the support of Pope Clement V (r. 1305–1314), condemned and executed the leaders of the order and procured its dissolution by the Council of Vienna.

Founded by Hasan-i Sabbah, a Nizari Ismaili missionary, the Hashshashin, known as the Assassins or Nizari, were a mysterious group of Muslim assassins that operated in the Middle East during the 13th century. The association was formed by Shia Muslims who previously broke off from a more prominent sect. They united with an aim to establish a perfect Shia state and by fighting Sunni Muslims and the Seljuk Turks, who controlled Persia at the time. Because of a limited number of members, the group used guerilla tactics in their battle against their enemies, including sabotage, espionage, and, most famously, political assassination. The Assassins would infiltrate their enemies with well-trained spies with strict instructions to attack only when the moment was right. They were extremely discreet in their actions, careful to minimize civilian casualties, and cautious in their operations. According to legend, their enemies would wake up in the morning finding a Hashshashin dagger on the pillow, with the note "you are in our grip." They became successful contract killers, performing jobs for famous people, among them King Richard the Lionhearted of England (r. 1189–1199). Mongols destroyed the group and almost in the same period destroyed the building with its library that contained Nizari documents. Therefore, much of what we know about them today is a myth, especially the story about the group's use of drugs. Hashshashin translates as "Hashish user," which some of them used when in action. The term "assassin" probably derived from the word "Hashshashin" related to the Nizari.

Vehmic Court, known as *Vehmgericht*, was a type of criminal tribunal in medieval Germany. Due to the inability of emperors to control functioning of the state, these tribunals emerged in Westphalia in the 12th century. They were not part of the legal system but still incredibly efficient. Those tribunals combined old traditions and new legal forms, and they provided a solution for the gap in the criminal law. Initially, they operated in Westphalia, but later, in 1382, Holy Roman Emperor Wenceslaus granted them jurisdiction over the territory of Germany, so they were founded in other major cities as well. Initially, they were public tribunals, but they became secret in the 14th century and functioned as "holy bands" sworn to secrecy. Accusations were made mysteriously, often by putting the notice on a tree, and death was the punishment for

failure to appear for trial. They were most powerful in the 15th century. Because of the corruption, abuse, and change of the political situation, as well as a general move against them, they disappeared in the 16th century.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; Persians; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; Islam, Expansion of

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Slavs

In the fifth century CE, the Roman Empire was severely shaken by the movement of diverse Germanic peoples, including the Goths, Vandals, Franks, Angles, and Saxons, as well as by the Huns, nomads from the steppe. Such movements led, in part, to the empire's loss of all of its western provinces, while its eastern provinces weathered the storm, guided from its impenetrable capital at Constantinople. The costly and prolonged military activity of Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), against Persia and in Africa and Italy, diluted defenders on the Danube frontier, and groups of Slavic peoples, likely originating from the region of today's Ukraine, began to raid and migrate into the Balkans. The Slavic groups were not organized as large confederations with clearly designated tribal leaders, as was the case with many Germanic tribes, but in small groups that worked independently. This was one of the major challenges that the empire faced in trying to check this movement. Then the Avars, a Turkic nomadic group, moved west from central Asia and took control over the region north of the Balkans, and the problem intensified. This migration had two important effects. First, it pressured many Slavs to move south, fleeing the Avars, and second, other Slavic groups were brought under Avar control and into military service. Both effects had a direct impact on the empire's Balkan frontier.

In 582 CE, the Avars seized Sirmium, a vital frontier fortification, which opened the door to greater Slavic incursions in the Balkans. To restore order, Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE) launched military campaigns, but his policies provoked an army revolt that overthrew him in 602 CE. This further weakened frontier defenses, and the subsequent war with Sassanid Persia (602–629 CE) led to the complete collapse of the Balkan frontier to Avar power and Slavic settlement as far south as the Peloponnese in southern Greece. Slavic peoples seized most of the Balkans, and Byzantine control extended only to coastal areas and cities, like Thessalonica. In 626 CE, the Avars and Persians coordinated an assault on Constantinople. The siege failed and, fortunately

STEFAN DUSHAN, EMPEROR OF SERBS, GREEKS, AND ALBANIANS

In the 14th century, when the Greek empire of Constantinople had been restored after the Latin interlude, the Serbian king Stephen Dushan (1331–1355), the greatest ruler of medieval Serbia, appeared to be a serious threat to Byzantium. Because of a family dispute over the throne, he was blinded as a boy and then exiled to Constantinople. After several years, he returned to Serbia when his father and grandfather had reconciled; in 1322 he became a "young king," or heir apparent. His stay in Byzantium was a valuable experience; his military background and his reputation as a skilled commander became assets in his war against Byzantium. He made peace with Emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus in 1334, having extended the territories of his state close to what is today the northern border of Greece. With the death of Andronicus III in 1341, the Byzantine Empire once more fell into family quarrels and civil war. Dushan, arriving close to Thessalonica, received an unexpected ally in John Cantacuzenus, the late emperor's general, who took up arms against the regents of the young successor, John V Palaeologus, and proclaimed himself emperor. Dushan first aided the Byzantine pretender, but their alliance broke up in 1343, and they became bitter enemies. On his own, Dushan conquered Albania and a greater part of Macedonia in the same year. In 1346, he was crowned as "emperor of the Serbs, Greeks, and Albanians," and in 1348, Dushan became a master of a vast territory from the rivers Save and Danube to the Corinthian Bay, and from the Adriatic and Ionian shores to the Aegean. He was unable to capture Constantinople, and shortly after his death his kingdom began to collapse.

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for Byzantium, the loss in prestige undermined Avar power, further weakened by revolts in the Western Balkans and central Europe and by another Turkic nomadic group, the Bulgars, from the east. The Bulgars displaced the Avars and migrated south of the Danube in the seventh century CE. They defeated Byzantium and established themselves permanently in the region by 681 CE. Byzantine weakness in the Balkans intensified with the emergence of Islam in Arabia and the onslaught of the Arab invasions after 634 CE, depriving the empire of its wealthiest provinces, from Syria to Egypt and North Africa, and transforming Anatolia itself into a new frontier zone.

In the Balkans, a Slavic transformation was occurring. The Slavic peoples themselves generally settled in small groups that did not look to a larger one, and the Byzantines referred to these regions as "Sclavinias." Emperors Constantine IV (r. 668–685 CE) and Justinian II (r. 685–695; 705–711 CE), when able to spare energy from defense against the Arab caliphates, began to regain Balkan territory, first in Thrace (close to Constantinople) and then in Greece. In the eighth century CE, Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE) directed even greater forces against Bulgarian power, and Empress Irene launched a campaign against other Slavic tribes farther south from 781–784 CE.

Byzantine power greatly expanded in the ninth century CE in much of the Balkan region. Byzantine control was established in the Greek peninsula and began extending northward. Over time, the remaining Slavs in the Greek peninsula were

Hellenized and converted to Christianity. The chief challenge in the Balkans remained Bulgarian power, which by the ninth century CE was well on its way of transitioning from its Turkic and nomadic roots, as overseers of sedentary Slavic tribes, to a much more mixed entity that was increasingly becoming Slavic. This transition was reminiscent of the Germanic Franks in Gaul in Western Europe, who also were linguistically absorbed by their more populous Romance-language-speaking subjects. The Franks may have given their name to the region (namely, France), but the Gallo-Roman inhabitants of Gaul gave their language (proto-French) to the Franks. During the ninth century CE, we begin to have Bulgar rulers, known as khans, with Slavic names, such as Malamir. Bulgarian power competed with other Slavic kingdoms, including the Serbs in the Balkans and Moravians in central Europe, whose authority extended to the Danube River.

A significant change in regional Byzantine-Slavic relations occurred with the conversion to Christianity of Bulgarian Khan Boris (852–889 CE), who became the "Constantine" of Bulgaria. Byzantine influence had long been evident in Bulgaria, and the khan was wary of that influence expanding. To prevent this, he first appealed for missionaries from the Franks, with whom he allied against the Moravian Kingdom, located between them. An exertion of Byzantine military power, however, forced Boris to accept baptism from Constantinople, and he adopted the baptismal name of Michael, after Emperor Michael III (r. 842–867 CE). Still seeking to ensure autonomy, Boris wanted to create a Bulgarian church that was independent of outside authority. To do so, he negotiated with the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, ultimately siding with Constantinople. Christian conversion also helped Boris further centralize political authority, establishing one religious leader, a Christian bishop, of his choosing, in place of dispersed pagan religious authority that largely rested with leading families. He also drew on Byzantine political and legal principles to augment his power beyond that drawn from Bulgar tradition. These changes provoked a major rebellion of leading families, which Boris brutally suppressed, paving the way for a stronger kingdom and, thus, a greater challenge to the Byzantine state.

In 862 CE, Rastislav, king of Great Moravia in central Europe (covering what is today the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and portions of Austria and Hungary), asked Byzantine Emperor Michael III (r. 842–867 CE) for a Christian missionary who could instruct the Moravians in their language. The Kingdom of Moravia lay between the East Frankish Kingdom of Louis the German (843–876 CE) and the Bulgarian Kingdom. As a Frankish and Bulgarian alliance emerged, Rastislav was squeezed between two threatening powers, while German missionaries appeared in his kingdom from the Eastern Franks. And so, he turned to Constantinople. Emperor Michael III chose the brothers Constantine (the future Cyril) and Methodius. They were from a prominent family in Thessalonica, where their father was a military officer. They grew up in a bilingual environment and were fluent in both Greek and Slavic. Methodius, the older brother, was an official in the Byzantine civil administration, while younger brother Constantine was sent to Constantinople to pursue higher education. Constantine served on a diplomatic mission to the Abbasid Caliphate, where he participated in discussions with Muslim theologians, explaining the

Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In 860–861 CE, Methodius joined him on a mission to the Khazars, where they sought to convert the khan from Judaism to Christianity. The mission failed, but on their return, Constantine discovered relics in the Crimea that he believed to be those of Saint Clement of Rome. For this mission, Constantine invented the first Slavic alphabet, called Glagolithic, a precursor of today's Cyrillic script. The brothers then began to translate the Christian texts for use among the Slavs.

The brothers' work began in Moravia, but the Frankish Christian leaders who resented their presence challenged them. The brothers traveled to Rome to defend themselves to Pope Nicholas I (858–867 CE) against accusations made by their rivals and to seek ordination for new leaders of the church in Moravia. On their way south, they defended their work in Venice against Western Christians who spurned this use of a new script and a new language for the Christian missionary enterprise. It was their view that only Latin, Greek, and Hebrew were acceptable languages for the worship of God. Constantine rejected this trilingual chauvinism and defended the Slavic liturgy. Pope Hadrian II (867–872 CE) welcomed the brothers and was delighted by their gift of the relics of Pope Clement that they had found in Crimea. The pope approved of the brothers' work and, concerned about German influence in the region, appointed Methodius as his representative. Methodius became bishop of Sirmium and papal legate to the Slavs. Constantine spent his final days in Rome and became a monk, taking the name Cyril, by which he is now known, just before his death on February 14, 869 CE. He is buried in the Basilica of Saint Clement at Rome.

In Moravia, Methodius continued his missionary activity among the Slavs, facing increasing hostility and encroachment by the Franks. In 870 CE, Rastislav was violently removed by his pro-Frankish nephew. Methodius lost his protector, and a German synod of Clerics condemned him. He was imprisoned for three years, until Pope John VIII (872–882 CE) negotiated his release. Pope John VIII was less accepting of the Slavic liturgy, and Methodius traveled back to Rome in 880 CE, where he persuaded the pope and was appointed archbishop of Pannonia.

Methodius's work in Moravia continued, but under much harassment until his death in 885 CE. After Methodius's death, the Franks destroyed the Moravian Kingdom and purged Moravia of Methodius's followers, eradicating his work there. The Franks reasserted the Latin liturgy, and Pope Stephen V (885–891 CE) denounced the Slavic rituals.

The brothers' efforts ultimately bore much fruit among the Slavs. Their followers, with Slavic texts in hand, made their way to the kingdom of the Bulgars and its khan, Boris (852–889 CE), who had converted to Christianity. It was in this environment that the Slavic script would be modified from the original form to what became the "Cyrillic" script used today for writing the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Russian, and other Slavic languages. Boris was quick to recognize the value of a script that was distinct from the Greek text and writing as he wanted a Bulgarian church that was independent of Constantinople. He, and even more so his son Symeon (893–927 CE), actively promoted the development of a Slavic literature. In Symeon's reign, a monk named Hrabr also offered a defense of the preference for Slavic letters over Greek ones, since

the Slavic alphabet was Christian from the beginning, whereas the Greek alphabet was tainted by its association with its non-Christian, pagan past.

Symeon had been educated in Constantinople and was influenced by Byzantine civilization, even seeking to become Byzantine emperor. During his reign, monasteries increasingly appeared in Slavic territory and then expanded into other Slavic kingdoms, including those of the Serbs and Croats, with their Christianization.

During the 10th and early 11th centuries, Byzantium defeated the Bulgarian Kingdom and restored control over the Balkan peninsula up to the Danube River. It was this era of Byzantine strength that Vladimir of Kiev, whose father, Svyatoslav, had been soundly defeated by Byzantine arms, converted to Christianity in 988 CE. The emergence of a Russian Christian culture was accelerated by the Slavic translation project in Balkans, which had begun with Constantine and Cyril.

The Russian polity was well beyond Byzantine power, but Byzantine cultural influence was significant, and the region's chief bishop, first at Kiev and later at Moscow, was consecrated by the patriarch of Constantinople until the mid-15th century. In the Balkans, with Byzantium controlling previously independent Slavic kingdoms, which had a sense of their independent cultural and political identity, rebellions broke out in the 11th and 12th centuries. As Byzantium confronted the Turkic Pecheneg and Seljuk powers on its northern and eastern frontiers, respectively, along with aggression from the west by the Catholic Normans and then Crusaders, its hold on the Balkans weakened. During this time, a rival non-Slavic Kingdom of Hungary began to exercise greater influence on the Slavic lands both north and south of the Danube, particularly in the Western Balkans. Shaking off Byzantine power, a second Bulgarian Empire was founded in 1185 and a Serbian Kingdom in the 13th century. Freed from Byzantium, both fell in the 14th century to the Ottoman Empire, which swallowed up all of the Balkans by the 15th century, leaving Moscow in Russia as the leading Orthodox Slavic center of power. With the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Russians began to conceive of Moscow as not only a new Jerusalem but also a "third Rome," inheriting the legitimate transfer of imperial authority and power, after the first two capitals had fallen because of their sins.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Patriarchs; *Individuals*: Irene; Justinian; Maurice; Methodius and Cyril, Apostles to the Slavs; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Bulgars; Franks; Normans; Persians; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Islam, Expansion of; *Key Places*: Byzantium

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Venationes

Venationes were a Roman public spectacle comprising animal hunts or contents between humans and wild beasts. Along with gladiator fights, *venationes* were the most popular public sports in the Roman and Byzantine Empires. In the Byzantine period, they were later succeeded by chariot racing as the most important form both of entertainment and amusement. In Constantinople, *venationes* were initially performed in an arena known as the *Cynegion*, but, after 537 CE, such spectacles moved to the Hippodrome, the venue for chariot races. At the Hippodrome, *venationes* were either separate performances or were presented during the intervals between chariot races. After the early sixth century CE, the production of *venationes* ceased.

The *venationes* were the favorite part of the games, taking place at the amphitheater as a morning event. In the beginning, Roman society saw animal fighting as an elite activity. Gradually, a new approach to the concept appeared: the Romans transformed what was a leisure activity for the elite into an entertaining show for a broad audience. In this section of the spectacle, the population would observe either animals fighting one another or humans hunting animals. A separate component of the game was the execution of criminals by animals called *damnatio ad bestias* ("condemned to the beasts").

In the earliest Republican performances, the Romans would merely display animals in the arena or in the circus. Later, in the Roman imperial period, *venatores* (hunters) were lightly armed, wearing only fasciae (padded wrappings on legs or torso) to protect themselves, and attacked animals with lances. Another type of competitors was bullfighters (taurocentae) who fought on horseback. For the most part, bestiarii fought on foot against animals such as boars, bears, and great cats. As with the gladiatorial combats, the *venationes* were a political tool used by the elite to gain the favor and support of the people. As a result, animals increased in size and numbers, and the games reached surprising levels of popularity as members of Roman society competed for their position within it. Unfortunately, the growing demand for rare and imported animals, along with the development of agriculture, which destroyed their natural habitats, led to diminishing numbers of animals in the wild.

The Romans were extremely interested in purchasing numerous and diverse animals to take part in their games. Animals participating in the spectacles varied from the ordinary to more exotic ones, such as crocodiles or hippopotami. Unique animals

were a particular point of interest for wealthy Roman patrons. The Romans especially preferred big cats, including lions, leopards, and panthers. Therefore, they spared no efforts to explore the vast territory of the empire and allocated enormous resources to obtain and transport these wild beasts back to Rome. The games also possessed their political side, because an impressive menagerie of animals meant that spectators would long remember the games and their patron's name. A patron able to provide many unique animals for his spectacle was undoubtedly a powerful and wealthy individual.

Gladiatorial fights disappeared first, in the fourth century CE, perhaps due to a change of taste or imperial disfavor, or most probably because of their high cost and the difficulties in acquiring gladiators. However, *venationes* lasted one more century; Emperor Anastasius (r. 491–518 CE) banned them throughout the Eastern Empire in 498 CE, and the last known performance in Rome occurred in 523 CE. *Venationes* presented in sixth-century Constantinople were unlike the programs offered in the Western Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. Ferocity and carnage were features typical for Roman *venationes*, accompanied with the heavy armor and shields the venator wore. In the Byzantine era, there appeared a wide range of devices to provide security and to protect both human and animal participants and to provide spectators with an entertaining event. Everything suggests that the tricks similar to those performed in modern circuses would replace the mortal combat of the Colosseum. By the sixth century CE, ferocity and danger were not typical anymore for *venationes* and beast exhibitions as they were in the case of their Western antecedents.

Some scholars believe that Christianity caused this softening. Because Christians could not outright ban these shows, they sought instead to change the nature of the programs, and to put stress on skills and ability. The main reasons for the disappearance of the *venationes* were largely economic—obtaining and feeding wild beasts became very expensive. Thus, the Byzantine Empire witnessed at the same time the rise of popularity of chariot races and the decline of wild beast fights. When the former reached its golden age, the latter already came to its end. In 498 CE, during the reign of Anastasius I (r. 491–518 CE), the emperor passed a decree that banned the killing of animals in the arena. The last recorded *venatio* took place in Constantinople in 537 CE during the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE).

Lack of violence and death characterized the *venationes* performed in the Byzantine Empire. These sporting events were no longer fights involving wild animals in the traditional Roman sense, but rather an imitation of battles and demonstrations of deftness and skill. Also, the events became not so much contents but exhibitions of exotic animals that lacked danger and emphasized entertainment for a more Christian society that placed greater value on human life.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Government and Politics*: Factions, Political; *Individuals*: Anastasius, Flavius; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Demes; *Key Places*: Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Key Events

OVERVIEW ESSAY

The section on Key Events presents the story of the Byzantine Empire throughout 31 entries thoughtfully selected by the editors with an aim to introduce a reader to the most significant events of the empire and the rest of Europe as well. They also serve to establish connections that will provide a broader and more complete picture of the topic. The development of the Byzantine Empire cannot be explained adequately by limiting the occurrences within imperial territory only. Thus, the entries are extended to cover accounts in Asia Minor and North Africa.

Byzantines on the Battlefield

Instability was present during the entire period of the empire's existence, manifested through continuous internal and external strife. The Byzantine Empire was involved in almost uninterrupted warfare along all borders of its dominion and suffered attacks from all directions. These conflicts not only shaped the state physically and defined its limits, but also had a strong impact on the overall development of the empire.

The history of the Byzantine Empire symbolically began with the fall of Rome and had its closing chapter in the siege and fall of Constantinople, both accounts being covered by elaborate entries. The historical timeline has been extended to include the events that had preceded the end of the Western Roman Empire as well. They allow a reader to completely understand the reasons why the western part ceased to exist, and the eastern managed to position itself on the world map and to overcome adversities. The entry on the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (314 CE) relates to the conflict between Constantine I and Maxentius, whose outcome was decisive for the future of the Roman Empire since it initiated Constantine's conversion to Christianity. Both the late Roman Empire and the early Byzantine had to confront Gothic invasion. At Adrianople (378 CE), the Romans failed to impede the latter's farther penetration. Tense relations between two ethnic groups resulted in the Massacre of Thessalonica (390 CE), a massive atrocity against the citizens of Thessalonica carried out by the Gothic military groups under the command of Theodosius.

From the 4th to the 7th century, the two main forces that dominated in the Near East were the Byzantine Empire and Persia, and they fought against each other on many occasions. The entry on the Battle of Yarmouk (636 CE) defines the defeat of the

Byzantine forces as a new phase in the expansion of Islam and as the beginning of Muslim conquests outside Arabia. In the 10th century, Macedonian emperors converted the Byzantine Empire into a great eastern power, with their conquests penetrating as far as Syria. From the 11th century, the empire's attention was turned to the east: Seljuk Muslims and the Crusades became its focus. Despite poor relations with the Byzantines, the papacy agreed to assist them in their struggles to prevent Seljuks from occupying their lands. The Seljuk campaign officially began with a victory over the imperial forces at the Battle of Manzikert (1071). The Crusaders continued to fight for 200 years, in a few occasions even against the Byzantines. At the end, all their efforts were unsuccessful since the Turkish Ottoman Empire conquered a great part of imperial territory. The entries on the First, Second and Fourth Crusades chronicle the timing and sequence of military campaigns on the ground, and diplomacy and negotiations out of public view.

Finally, the Fourth Crusade was a major factor in the ultimate disappearance of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. The last Crusade turned against the Byzantines, and its army sacked Constantinople and installed "Latin" kings to rule it for five decades. After this, the Byzantine Empire was restored, but it had been weakened and it could not resist Ottoman's invasion in the 15th century. However, the empire was perpetuated in the Orthodox churches and in the cultural sphere.

Religion and the Byzantine Empire

Christianity is considered a third pillar on which the Byzantine Empire was founded, along with Hellenic culture and Roman civilization. The question of religion has always been controversial and had its rather difficult moments. Beginning with the Edict of Milan (314 CE) on religious tolerance, gradually but steadily, the pagan character of the Roman Empire transformed. The initial conflict between paganism and Christianity was, in time, replaced with continuing strife within Christianity. The doctrine of the Christian Church was established over the centuries at various ecumenical councils dating from as early as 325 CE, when the first one in Nicaea was held. Over time the empire officially became a Christian state, as proclaimed by another Edict of Thessalonica (380 CE). From the fourth to the eighth century, many bitter and prolonged theological disputes took place and a political dimension additionally complicated the issues. Some of the more important crises within the Byzantine church were related to Arianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism. These heretical teachings were discussed at numerous councils, as explained in six separate entries. With participation of leaders of all Christian communities, ecumenical councils made decisions on the most important religious issues: definition of the faith and condemnation of heresies. The Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) approved decisions regarding the Nicene Creed adopted at the Council of Nicaea, as well as those accepted at the Council of Constantinople (381 CE). Emperor Zeno tried in 482 CE to reconcile eastern Christians, Monophysites, and Orthodox Byzantines. He proclaimed the *Henoticon*, an edict known as "Act of Union," which accepted only the decisions of the first three ecumenical councils. The failure of the reconciliation forced Emperor

Justinian to make another attempt. He was involved in the so-called Three Chapters Controversy. The Three Chapters were writings of three strong critics of Monophysitism. After many futile attempts, he convoked the Council of Constantinople (553 CE) to officially condemn them. In the seventh century, the subject of the religious discussion at the Sixth Council in Constantinople (680 CE) concerned the emerging heresy of Monothelitism.

From 711 to 843 CE, the Byzantine Empire suffered a severe crisis, caused by the Iconoclastic controversy, a theological dispute over the use of icons—religious images—that involved both the Byzantine church and the state. At the same time, the relations between Rome and Constantinople worsened and the two centers of Christianity began to alienate each other visibly in the second half of the eighth century. They finally split over the conflict with Rome in the Great Schism in 1054. Despite that, the Eastern Orthodox remained stable and displayed its strength in outliving the Byzantine Empire itself.

Justinian's Restoration

The thousand years that the Byzantine Empire outlived the Roman Empire were not always filled with disaster. Several crises to which Byzantium almost succumbed were followed by periods of bliss and unexpected revivals. Various entries of this section are dedicated to one of the greatest periods in Byzantine history—the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE)—known as *Imperiii Renovatio.* Five decades of restoration of the empire represent an intensive period marked by increased activities in the spheres of politics, law, religion, and territorial expansion. The entry on the Golden Age explains in general achievements of the endlessly ambitious emperor. Justinian's Reconquest of the West displays the scope of the military operations the empire undertook to restore itself as it was during the most glorious days of Rome, and to convert the Mediterranean Sea into a Roman lake. During his rule, Justinian was still forced to confront setbacks and obstacles. The Nika Revolt is one of the most challenging moments. Probably for the first time, the emperor was almost inclined to surrender his imperial power.

Certainly, a highest achievement of Justinian's rule was the codification of Roman law, presented in the entry *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. It was founded on the Theodosian Code, a previous codification whose details are exposed in a separate entry. Justinian's Code regulated clearly and precisely the entire public and private life of the empire. It is significant for the civilization because it preserved a large amount of Roman jurisprudence and presents an important element in the legal development of Europe.

The Byzantine Empire and Europe

In the eighth century, emperors from the dynasty of the Isaurians broke the momentum of Islam at the very gates of Constantinople while Charles Martel saved the Christian world at the Battle of Poitiers from Muslim domination. The latter (grandfather of Charlemagne) enabled the power and influence of the Carolingians to grow,

which in turn allowed Charlemagne to be crowned in Rome in 800 CE. Other events that make up part of this section that also took place on European soil are the so-called Sicilian Vespers (1282) and the Black Death. The Sicilian Vespers was a massacre of the French with which the Sicilians began their revolt against Charles I, Angevin, king of Naples and Sicily. This riot precipitated a French-Aragonese struggle for possession of that kingdom. The Byzantine Empire was affected by these two occurrences, just as it was by a deadly plague known as the Black Death. In only three years, from 1347 to 1350, the epidemic disease killed one-third of Europe's population.

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Adrianople, Battle of (378 CE)

On August 9, 378 CE, the Eastern Roman army, led by Emperor Valens (r. 364–378 CE), confronted the Germanic Visigoths near present-day Edirne, in European Turkey. The Battle of Adrianople (also known as Hadrianopolis) resulted in the defeat of the Roman forces and the emperor being killed on the battlefield. The Arian Valens was the first emperor to fight a difficult battle on two fronts, and, unfortunately, die in it. This disaster is often seen as the key moment in a process that led to the collapse of the western half of the Roman Empire a century later.

Adrianople had been a site of memorable battles due to its geostrategic position. It stands on the river Maritsa, at the intersection of the routes from the Aegean, Marmara, and Black Seas. It was the main fortress guarding the northern approaches to Constantinople and was hence key to military control.

The Eastern Roman Empire was under constant pressure from barbaric tribes that were moving westward. The biggest crisis in the empire started when the Visigoths, having been previously displaced by the Huns, broke through regions along the Danube River. They were settled in the Diocese of Thrace in 376 CE with the permission of Emperor Valens, upon the request of their leader, Fritigern, and were even aided to cross the Danube. Some historians consider this concession of land to barbarians as the main cause of the disaster at Adrianople as well as the decline of the Roman Empire. The emperor expected them to be farmers and soldiers, and therefore allies he could possibly rely on in military campaigns in the region. Their arrival and settlement were not properly organized, and the local governors showed great dishonesty toward them. Angered by the hardships they suffered, they rose in rebellion.

Soon, the Visigoths were joined by their neighbors the Ostrogoths and Huns, and the entire Thracian Diocese was overwhelmed by barbarians who burned and looted indiscriminately. Valens hurried back from his war with the Persians as soon as he was informed about the terrible situation along the Danube River.

Compared with the period of the Republic or early Roman period, the principal feature of the Roman Legion in the later Roman period was its reduced size and superiority. Difficulties with recruitment were increasing, and Valens found it hard to maintain the army's strength. This decline forced him to rely on barbarian troops, who, on the other hand, were traditionally considered weaker in discipline and training. Therefore, before major campaigns the military forces were expanded by hiring Germanic and Hunnic soldiers. Another significant feature of these forces was the shift toward cavalry. But they were still an effective fighting force.

Valens was very confident in his victory and anticipated complete success for a reason. Early in his reign, in 369 CE, he had won a short war against the Goths along the Danube. Also, earlier that summer, his general Sebastianus had enjoyed success against Gothic detachments in Macedonia and Thrace.

Valens's garrisons were spread around the territory of the empire. He was forced to withdraw forces form Isauria and make a truce with Persia and Arabia, so he could deal with the Gothic threat. As early as 376–377 CE, the main Roman army in the Balkans under the command of Lipicinus was destroyed at a battle near Marcianople (modern-day Dobrudja, Bulgaria), which forced Valens to gather a new army. It is generally considered that the Roman forces equaled approximately 20,000 soldiers.

Gothic forces were massive, and the emperor had to ask for help from his nephew and coemperor, Gratian (r. 367–383 CE). The western part of the empire was also fighting with its enemies, the Alemanni, along the Rhine River, so Gratian was delayed with his army. For unknown reasons, Valens decided not to wait for the additional forces and started the fight with the Goths. Adrianople was a perfect example of how commanders often played a very important role in the actual fighting. The outcome of the battle at Adrianople was marked by the actions of the Gothic commander, Fritigern, and by Emperor Valens and his generals' inability to respond properly. It is often stated that expanded bureaucracy in the Roman forces was harmful to the activity of the army. On the other side, Gothic military leadership was experienced and tough, and their intelligence gathering was very successful.

On August 9, Visigoths and Ostrogoths defeated the eastern forces, and Emperor Valens was killed in the battle. This battle was a Roman military disaster and a landmark in the history of the Roman Empire. The loss was so massive that the empire never completely recovered. The important aspect of the battle is the fact that it was a victory of the barbaric horsemen over Roman infantry. Generally, the outcome was dictated by the culmination in the changes of the Roman military structure on one side, and the changes in Roman barbarian policy on the other.

Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE), who succeeded Valens, reached an agreement with the Goths. Accordingly, the Visigoths moved to Pannonia, while the Ostrogoths departed to Thrace, and both groups enjoyed autonomous status. Furthermore, they

agreed to aid the imperial army, so its majority was composed of barbarian forces, some even occupying commanding positions.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Recruitment; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Military*: *Foederati; Primary Documents*: Document 11

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Black Death

An epidemic disease in the Middle Ages called the Black Death killed a higher proportion of people than any other event. The plague arrived in Western Europe in the fall of 1347 and disappeared in the early 1350s. In a short period of only three years, one-third of the European population died, and therefore became significantly reduced in comparison with the previous period.

The origins of this deadly plague could be traced back to central Asia, probably China or the Russian steppes, and from there it spread eastward. The expansion of trade during the early and High Middle Ages created routes, such as the Silk Road, connecting Asia and Europe. European merchants, especially those from Italian city-states, traveled regularly to the region of the Black Sea and transported Chinese goods on their boats. Inevitable travel companions on these boats were rats and their fleas, carrying bacteria that caused the bubonic plague. This method is how the Black Death arrived in Europe. Some experts believe that bacteria arrived at the region of Crimea first, and then spread in two directions: south and east into the Middle East and west and north into Europe.

Previously, the bubonic plague was present on European soil on several occasions. Procopius, the Byzantine court historian, wrote about the disease that ravaged the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) and then moved across Europe. The Plague of Justinian killed up to 10,000 people a day in Constantinople. The epidemics reappeared in cycles, and it was on the European territory again in the 17th century in England, known as the Great Plague of London in 1665.

Regarding the physical description of the disease, contemporary sources are mainly consistent. The most commonly noted symptom, as well as the most dramatic, were buboes, or boils (also known as knobs, pimples, blisters), which were inevitably characteristic of the bubonic plague. No contemporary record indicates that the buboes

disappeared and patients recovered. Therefore, the first signs of buboes meant that death was approaching.

The way infection spread is a topic of major discussion and usually involves two schools of thought. The first believes that the plague passed from man to man. The second considers that some "poisoned cloud" existed and enabled the spread of the disease. Some scholars believe that infection did not transmit person to person because a higher mortality rate was present in the countryside than in urban centers, where the density of population was increasing. But, for most of the 14th century, doctors concluded a "polluted" atmosphere was the prime cause of the Black Death.

In this image from a codex dated 1376, a personification of death is shown strangling a plague victim. The Black Death, an epidemic of bubonic plague that lasted from 1347 to 1351, changed the way that death was viewed by the survivors and depicted in art. Over the course of the epidemic, millions of people died in Europe, the Middle East, and around the Mediterranean. (Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

The plague was devastating, and no age or social class was exempt: knights, princesses, monks, peasants were all victims. In the Middle Ages, the plague was so destructive that it was utterly incomprehensible to humans of the period. They were not well equipped to protect themselves: socially, medically, and psychologically they were defenseless. The population was not able to resist it because wars distracted the medieval peasants, and they were weakened by malnutrition, exhausted by an eternal struggle to survive on infertile land. Before the Black Death, most of Europe was in a recession, and compared with the previous century, its progress slowed or even stopped.

The daily contact between European people in the cities and surrounding villages facilitated the spread of the disease. The population did not possess enough medical knowledge to prevent its spread with any great success. Conditions in the cities were favorable for the disease: waste accumulated in the streets, houses crowded and built next to each other, pollution of rivers, and lack of drinking water made the situation even worse. With all these conditions arising from the High Middle Ages, it was only a matter of time before the population suffered disastrous results.

There is a traditional explanation that the name for the disease is linked with the color of the putrefying flesh of victim in the hours before the moment when death would finally strike. There exists no evidence for such an occurrence, and the only manifestation that appeared were black or purple blotches on the humans' skin. Another theory that might suggest such an explanation was the translation from Latin into English or some Scandinavian languages of the words used to describe the disease.

The question arises: How did citizens of medieval Europe react in confronting such a plague? Many followed Hippocratic advice and fled, while others stayed and waited. The influence of religion was decisive in many cases. Under Islamic doctrine, it was forbidden to flee, and many Muslims had to endure the plague. People interpreted the plague as God's will and one was supposed to demonstrate repentance, sometimes publicly. Religious minorities were subject to violent abuse, and this was the case with Jews.

It is important to underline that European ports introduced measures to prevent spreading disease by closing waters to suspect vessels or ships coming from infected areas. This action would usually last for 40 days, and the term "quarantine" derives from it.

Indeed, the spread of the plague was devastating, and a high number of dead influenced all sectors of the economy by causing a lack of workers and decreasing food production. Therefore, it was not just the illness killing the population but a famine as well.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Environment; Market; *Individuals*: Justinian; Procopius

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Chalcedon, Council of (451 CE)

The Fourth Ecumenical Council of the Christian Church was held in Chalcedon (modern Kadikoy in Turkey) in 451 CE. It was convoked by Emperor Marcian (r. 450–457 CE), who came to power just a year before. This council was one of the largest and best documented councils of the early history of the Christian Church, and it was attended by 520 bishops or their representatives.

The council approved decisions regarding the Nicene Creed adopted at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, as well as those approved at the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE. The two Councils of Ephesus organized afterward, in 431 and 449 CE,

respectively, represented the victory of the "one nature" view or Monophysitism. It proclaimed that after the Union of God and Man, in Christ's Incarnation, there was only one nature of God, a divine. Conversely, Chalcedon's council was summoned to support a compromise form, a Diphysite one. Diphysitism asserted that Christ is one person with two natures, divine and human. This view had already been proposed by Pope Leo in his "Dogmatic Letter" known as the *Tome*, addressed to Bishop Flavius of Constantinople, in June 449 CE.

In 449 CE, the Council of Ephesus, known as the "Robber Council," or *Latrocinium* in Latin, was convoked by Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE) and held under control of Dioscorus, patriarch of Alexandria. The council deposed Patriarch Flavius of Constantinople, absolved Archimandrite Eutyches, who had been excommunicated for his Monophysite beliefs, and appointed him in his stead, and did not allow readings of the *Tome*. Even though the results of the council were condemned by the pope and opposed by most of the Christian community, they remained unrevoked as long as Theodosius II, a patron of Eutyches, occupied the imperial seat. His unexpected death in July 450 CE, however, complicated the situation.

After the death of Theodosius in 450 CE, the imperial throne was occupied by his sister, Pulcheria. To obtain the throne, she was forced to marry in a short time, and her choice was the military general Marcian. Fully aware of the consequences of the Second Council of Ephesus (449 CE), she, along with her husband, convoked the Council of Chalcedon, in the city on the Asian side of the Bosporus Strait, very close to Constantinople. Pope Leo was not inclined to assist the council, so he sent his legates to preside over the sessions. He required a resolution of the dispute and decisions of the council to be based on his *Tome*.

The first issue on the agenda was to rectify the situation that had been provoked by the "Robber Council." Dioscorus, who was present at the council, was condemned both for the irregular conduct of the council and for his Monophysite teachings, and then deposed. This decision was not well accepted in Egypt and caused the Coptic Church to distance itself and separate from both Constantinople and Rome.

After these more formal issues, the council started composing its own declaration regarding the theological issues, called the Definition of Faith. This document approved by the council reaffirmed the creed of the previous councils in Nicaea and Constantinople, and consequently confirmed arguments of the first Council of Ephesus and the deposition of Nestorius.

This council accepted the dogma adopted at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, known as the Nicene Creed, and it also approved two letters of Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (412–444 CE) against Nestorius. These letters insisted on the unity of divine and human persons in Christ. Consequently, the council acclaimed the *Tome* of Pope Leo, confirming two distinct natures in Christ. Finally, it rejected the Monophysite doctrine stating that Christ had only one nature. One of the interesting decisions taken at the Council of Chalcedon was to give to Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–385 CE) the title of "Great."

Apart from the decisions that had been taken relating to main issues of Christianity, the council discussed some regulatory and administrative questions. One of the

significant resolutions was to give Jerusalem and Constantinople status of patriarchate, the highest possible rank within Orthodox Church organization, which allowed self-governing and meant it answered to no authority. This canon was rejected by Pope Leo because he considered it as an insult to the older patriarchates. Behind this official explanation was the fear that the ambitions of Constantinople could endanger the position of Rome.

An immediate consequence of the Chalcedon decisions was to create an even wider gap between the central Byzantine provinces and the eastern regions. Not only Egypt, but also Syria, the former center of Nestorianism, accepted Monophysitism and rose against the Chalcedon dogma. The Byzantine state was never able to resolve the antagonism that appeared between the Diphysite Byzantine church and the Monophysite eastern provinces.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; Patriarchs; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; *Key Places*: Chalcedon; Egypt

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Charlemagne, Coronation of (800 CE)

Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne, also known as Charles the Great, emperor of the Romans on Christmas Day, 800 CE. The coronation, which took place at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, was unprecedented and, by some accounts, unexpected. This act created the Holy Roman Empire and named Charlemagne, who previously had been king of the Franks and Lombards, the emperor of Rome in the same style as Augustus (which was part of his title). For the first time since 476 CE, an emperor ruled again in the territories of the Western Roman Empire. Through his rule, Charlemagne helped create a Western Christian identity for Europe that would last well into modern times.

Charlemagne was a Frankish king of the Carolingian Dynasty and grandson of Charles Martel, the hero of the Battle of Tours (732 CE). He became king of the Franks in 768 CE after the death of his father, Pepin. Initially, Charlemagne shared kingship with Carloman, his brother, until 771 CE. In 774 CE, Charlemagne acquired the title king of the Lombards, after a successful military campaign against King Desiderius. At the time of the coronation, Charlemagne controlled modern-day France, much of central Europe, and northern Italy.

This manuscript illumination depicts Pope Leo III crowning Charlemagne as "Emperor of the Romans" on December 25, 800 CE. The last Roman emperor in the West had passed from the scene in the fifth century and since that time an emperor had reigned only from Constantinople. Pope Leo revived the office for the West, asserting the Pope's role as the grantor of this title. Charlemagne benefited by obtaining a more elevated political title than Germanic king, but these aspirations brought conflict with the government of Constantinople, which already had an emperor, ruling an empire to which Charlemagne had no rightful claim. (The British Library)

Charlemagne's influence also extended to the papacy, and this relationship was one factor in his coronation. In 799 CE, he intervened in a dispute between Pope Leo III and the Romans, who accused him of various wrongdoings. After being attacked, Leo fled the city for Paderborn, a city in modern-day Germany. Charlemagne met with him there, and scholars believe that these talks may have been the first to discuss a coronation. For his part, Charlemagne agreed with an earlier declaration, made under Theodoric the Ostrogoth in the sixth century, that no one could judge the pope. Leo III returned to Rome, with Charlemagne's full support.

Over the next year, Charlemagne undertook a journey through his kingdom, with a final stop in Rome in November 800 CE. He met Leo III at the 12-mile marker outside the city, following an old tradition of Roman emperors. That Christmas Day, after celebrating the Nativity, Leo III crowned Charlemagne and declared him *imperator Romanorum*, or emperor of the Romans, and Augustus. Aside from these details, there is confusion about the event, mainly whether Charlemagne knew what was about to happen. Einhard, who wrote *The Life of Charlemagne* around 830 CE, claims Charlemagne had such an aversion to the imperial title he would not have set foot in the church that day if he had foreseen the pope's design. However, it is likely that Einhard fabricated this part of his account. It was a tradition, dating back to the Roman Empire, for a person to accept such authority humbly and reluctantly, and scholars find it difficult to believe that Charlemagne was indeed caught off guard. Immediately before the coronation, he had received the keys to Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre, sent by the patriarch of Jerusalem. Such action suggests several parties were aware of a planned coronation.

This recognition from the religious leader of Jerusalem is part of the second factor behind Charlemagne's coronation. The Iconoclastic Controversy had already strained Roman-Byzantine relations, as Rome did not denounce the worship of idols. In 797 CE, Irene took the throne of the Byzantine Empire by overthrowing her son, Constantine VI (r. 780–797 CE), and declared that she would rule in her own right. Although Irene was an Iconophile, both Charlemagne and Leo III (r. 717–741 CE) considered the rule of a woman illegitimate, and so they viewed the imperial throne as vacant. Through coronation as emperor, Charlemagne became the newly recognized authority in Christendom. The patriarch of Jerusalem was not the only notable figure to court favor with the new emperor. Charlemagne also received ambassadors from Sultan Harun al-Rashid of the Abbasid Caliphate. This marked a decline in Constantinople's influence on Western Christendom. The papacy filled this void, while also becoming the entity capable of crowning future emperors.

Charlemagne's ascension to the imperial throne in the West threatened both the Byzantines and the Franks. In 812 CE, after years of tense relations and brief military conflict over territory in Italy, the Byzantines recognized Charlemagne's title. However, they would not accept that he was the emperor of Rome, as that would always belong, in their view, to the emperor in Constantinople. Instead, they admitted Charlemagne as an equal. This concession was easier to grant because, by this time, Charlemagne had stopped calling himself a Roman emperor. His power base was still with the Franks, who had no interest in being ruled by Rome. Charlemagne continued to prefer the title king of the Franks even after his coronation.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Patriarchs**;** *Individuals*: Irene; *Groups and Organizations*: Franks; *Key Events*: Iconoclastic Controversy

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Constantinople, Siege and Fall of (1453)

The siege of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, took place in 1453 when massive forces of Ottoman Turks led by Sultan Mehmed II assaulted the

fortified city. There was a distinct imbalance in the number of soldiers, around 10,000 men defending and between 100,000 and 150,000 well-equipped Turks attacking. The siege lasted for 50 days and finally ended with the fall of Constantinople, and therefore the end of the Byzantine Empire as well.

In the 15th century, once wealthy and powerful, the Byzantine Empire was in constant decline. Over the previous two centuries, the Byzantines faced severe hardships. Greedy Christian armies in the Fourth Crusade conquered them, then they suffered from political instability, and finally, they lost nearly half of their population to the plague, known as the Black Death. The only thing functioning for the Byzantines was that water surrounded Constantinople on three sides and an almost impenetrable, layered system of walls and fortifications further protected the city. They built a triple line of fortifications during the reign of Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE) in 413 CE, then extended the inner and outer walls with an outer moat in 447 CE.

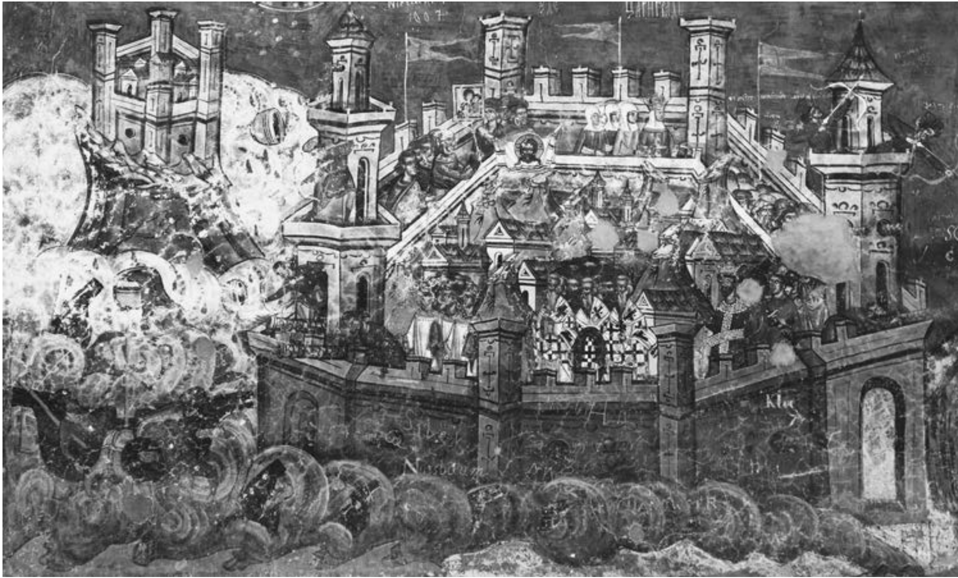
The Turks, on the other hand, were going through a flourishing period and had never been more powerful. After dealing with their internal conflicts throughout the previous century as well as a Mongol invasion, they finally reached a period of stability. When in 1451, after Mehmed II (1451–1481) came to power following the death of his father, Sultan Murat II, the days of the Byzantine Empire were numbered. His first task was to remove the Byzantine capital from the map of the Ottoman Empire, since it occupied a central position in the middle of his domain, separating Asian countries from European land.

Mehmed II proved to be the unifying ruler able to consolidate the Ottoman forces, and he is well-known as Mehmed the Conqueror. By the time he decided to place Constantinople under siege, the Turks had conquered all of Anatolia, as well as a significant part of the Balkans to the north. As they gained support from the inhabitants of Anatolia, they also assembled a great army.

On the other side, Constantine XI became Byzantine emperor in 1449. His bravery and energy of a great politician were not enough. Therefore, with great reluctance, he had no choice but to call on the West for help. When the pope's envoy came to Constantinople in 1452, on December 12 in the church Hagia Sophia, the emperor proclaimed a religious agreement between East and West and served a Roman Mass. He made this move to revive the union with the Catholic Church. Still, the Byzantine population did not welcome this act, and they reacted negatively, urging for the preservation of their faith. The assistance from the West failed to materialize, not only due to the hatred of the Byzantines but also because of conflicting interests of the Western states.

In April 1453, Mehmed II gathered powerful forces around Constantinople, this time technically superior. Aided by engineers from the West, he created a new kind of weapon—heavy artillery. Mehmet with his superior military technology continually fired on the walls of the city, inflicting irreparable damage. As some historians state, "cannons were solving everything."

The Turks first decided to set up a blockage of Constantinople's port, which turned out to be an impossible task. The city was located on the northern tip of a peninsula referred to as the Golden Horn because of the significant wealth it had won for the



This 16th-century fresco, located in the Church of Annunciation in Moldovita, Romania, shows the Ottoman siege of Constantinople in 1453. The Byzantine Empire, weakened by continuous conflict and loss of territory, was unable to defend its capital against the Ottomans, led by Mehmed II. The city was captured on May 29, 1453, and became the new capital of the Ottomans, who renamed it Istanbul. (Ilona Budzbon/iStockphoto.com)

Byzantine Empire in sea trade. Since it was commercially valuable, the Byzantines protected the peninsula by putting in a system of chains stretching across the harbor, stopping any ships from passing. Therefore, it was impossible for Mehmet's forces to complete the blockade. He had to find another solution. Mehmet ordered his soldiers to transport the lighter ships over land, to place them in the harbor beyond the chains.

The Turkish invasion on land was equally successful. Various layers of stone walls surrounded Constantinople. These walls had protected the city against continuous attacks over its long existence until the Christian knights conquered the city in the 13th century during the Fourth Crusade. Not only did the Turks heavily outnumber the Byzantine forces, a problem the empire had to face many times in the past, but they also used artillery cannons, which the city never had to face before. For two months, the Turks blasted the walls of Constantinople into rubble.

Mehmed directed the first attack against the weakest points of the city wall. The Byzantines fought with passion and succeeded in postponing the defeat. They resisted the second attack as well, despite being assaulted from both land and sea. The decisive elements in the fight were specialized elite troops called janissaries, who managed to enter the city. Lorenzo Giustiniani, who led the Venetian forces, was killed and his death provoked confusion among soldiers. Constantine XI also lost his life in the battle. The Ottomans captured Constantinople, and Mehmed renamed

JANISSARIES

Janissaries were elite standing troops of infantrymen in the Ottoman Empire; they were formed by the Ottoman Sultan Murad I around 1380. Janissary recruits were chosen from groups of Christian youths, aged from 7 to 14, who were taken into Ottoman service in periodic levies on Christian families, predominantly those in the Balkans. The boys were brought to Istanbul, converted to Islam, and then trained for military service. The Janissary corps was originally organized when a group of prisoners of war were converted to Islam and personally attached to the sultan. They received special privileges and benefits to secure their obedience to the ruler, and they were organized into small companies of celibate soldiers living in barracks and receiving constant military training. Janissaries were famous for their singular marching style and headgear, as well as their music bands that inspired many others in Europe. The Janissaries made significant contributions to many important Ottoman victories, among them the conquest of Constantinople in the spring of 1453.

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the city Istanbul. The empire that outlived the Roman Empire for a millennium came to its end.

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See also: *Individuals*: Theodosius II; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; *Key Events*: Black Death; *Key Places*: Byzantium; Theodosian Harbor (Constantinople); Walls of Theodosius (Constantinople)

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Corpus Iuris Civilis

The biggest and most durable achievement of Emperor Justinian's rule (r. 527–565 CE) is the codification of the Roman law in the form of a collection of fundamental works issued from 529 to 534 CE, known by its modern name *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. Based on the *Codex Theodosianus* and other relevant documents available, a commission headed by the court official Tribonian made a systematic compilation of the laws in force from the times after Hadrian.

As with many other works completed during Justinian's rule, this project was finished with amazing speed because of the ability and skills of the professionals assembled by Tribonian. Justinian succeeded his uncle Justin in 527 CE, and only one year later he appointed a commission of 10 persons, 8 high officials and 2 practicing lawyers. His instructions were to collect imperial constitutions contained in the books of Gregorius, Hermogenianus, and Theodosius, as well as the constitutions (laws) that were published subsequently. Their task was to exclude or change what was outdated, unnecessary, or contradictory and arrange it in heads and chronological order, and finally name it after the emperor—*Codex Justinianus*. This book was approved by the emperor in 529 CE, and he proclaimed it the only reference for the law courts.

The next assignment for the professionals was to deal with textbooks and other legal literature. In 530 CE, Tribonian, a member of the previous commission, was ordered to assemble a new group of professional and practicing lawyers. They would work in the imperial palace and under his supervision, so they would digest all the laws outside the *constitutiones* into one volume. This was an enormous amount of work never attempted before, and it was completed in three years. The book, called *Digesta* or *Pandectea*, was divided into seven parts and 50 books, and took effect as a law on December 3, 533 CE. Between 200 and 300 treatises by 40 authors were revised. Most of the documents were from books written between the reigns of Trajan (r. 98–117 CE) and Alexander Severus (r. 222–235 CE).

As a third volume, *Institutiones* represented an overview of the previous works, and it was used as a textbook or manual for students. It was also approved by the emperor and took effect as a law on the same date as the *Digesta*. To complement this work, an authoritative course of study was introduced, and law schools were approved in Constantinople, Rome, and Beirut.

This was not the end of Justinian's legislative activity. From time to time, or when circumstances required, he would issue a new constitution for the laws or regulations for the imperial or local administration. The last work, as a conclusion, was a compilation of new enactments after the publication of the code, and it is known as *Novellae Constitutiones*, meaning "new laws." These replaced or amended some parts of the code, *Digesta* and *Institutiones*, which all formed the *Corpus Iuris* as received by European nations. The first three parts were published in Latin, but most of the new laws were written in Greek.

Apart from being mere codification, Justinian's work was also a consolidation of the law, or more specifically, the common and statute law. It provided the Roman world with a practical account and an explanation for the law in use. More important, it has preserved for civilization a large amount of jurisprudence of the best Roman professionals.

The codification of Roman law represented a solid legal basis for the state. The Roman law edited by the Byzantines regulated clearly and precisely the entire public and private life. Some changes were made to adjust the codified law to new conditions and to the Christian moral and common law of the Hellenized East.

The significant characteristic of Justinian's law was the emphasis on imperial absolutism. The legal explanation of monarchy in this code influenced strongly the

development of political ideas, not only in the Byzantine Empire but also in the West. Ever since, the Roman law shaped by Justinian's jurists presented an important element in the legal development of Europe.

Tribonian did his work thoroughly and in detail. He was not always satisfied with the results and made a lot of corrections and revisions. This second or revised code that took effect on December 29, 534 CE, is what we have nowadays. The role Tribonian had in this great reform is proved by the fact that only 18 *Novellas* are dated after his death, though Justinian survived him by almost two decades. The previously published Theodosian Code was the only body of civil law in widespread use in Western Europe until *Corpus Iuris Civilis* became known.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Individuals*: Justinian; Theodosius II; *Key Events*: Theodosian Code

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Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (553 CE)

The Council of Constantinople held in 553 CE was the Fifth Ecumenical Council of the Christian Church, also known as the Second Council of Constantinople. It was convoked by Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) and presided over by Eutychius, the patriarch of Constantinople. Pope Vigilius of Rome was invited, but because of his opposition to the council, he took sanctuary in a church in that period.

The main issue discussed at the Council was once again eastern Monophysitism. The politics of military expansion required collaboration with the Roman Church and consequently a firm anti-Monophysite position. This attitude inevitably raised hostility in Egypt and Syria toward the Byzantine court and even provoked separatist tendencies among the Coptic and Syrian population. Justinian was in constant search for a balance and a way out from this confusing situation.

At the beginning of his reign, Justinian promulgated laws against heretics in 527 and 528 CE. He made their position in the society extremely difficult. Their meetings were forbidden, their churches were closed, and they were excluded from public offices and even deprived of some civil rights. All those who refused to conform were persecuted. But, if the good relations with the papacy were needed for his politics in the

West to succeed in the East, he had to include numerous and powerful Monophysites in the society. He attempted to reconcile with them and he recalled monks from exile. There was a constant change of position in the following period until he decided to convoke the council, which opened on May 5 in the church of Hagia Sophia after careful planning and organization. The pope refused to assist, and the only representatives of the West were church members from Africa.

The council officially condemned the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the writings of Theodoret of Cyrrhus against Cyril of Alexandria and in defense of Nestorius, and the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Persian Bishop Mari of Hardascir. These writings are known as the Three Chapters. The only other important act of the council was to ratify an earlier condemnation of Origen, a distinguished scholar. Some historians point out that Justinian, although a chief organizer of the council, did not condemn Theodore of Mopsuestia and was even indulgent toward Ibas and Theodoret.

Unfortunately, violence was used to enforce the decisions of the council, especially toward those who supported the pope's resistance. The condemnation of the Three Chapters was made by the decree on June 2, 553 CE, and once more confirmed by the *Constitutum* of February 554 CE.

The council in Constantinople faced serious opposition in the Western church even though Pope Vigilius accepted its decisions and ratified its verdicts the following year. The opposition that the pope encountered in Italy was especially strong, and it led to a schism that lasted almost a century. This affair humiliated and discredited the papacy on one side, and on the other, Justinian failed to resolve the theological issues.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Monophysites

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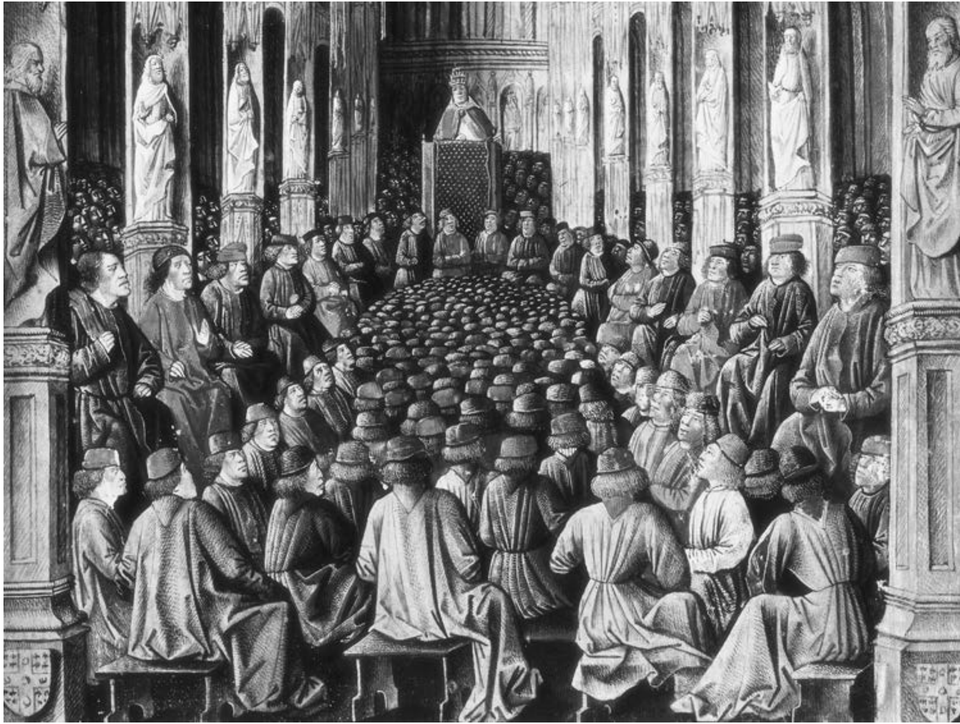
First Crusade (1095–1099)

The First Crusade, which ran from 1095–1099, was the first in a series of wars carried out by Western Christendom on the Islamic societies of the Middle East. The experience of the First Crusade led to many new developments in Europe and the Byzantine Empire: the concept of the holy war, the long conflict between Christianity and Islam, European colonies in the Middle East, and the power of the papacy to call for war.



This 15th-century illustration shows the Council of Claremont, where Pope Urban II called for the First Crusade in 1095. Tens of thousands of Europeans, responding to a call for help from the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus, journeyed to the Middle East to expel the Seljuk Turks from the Holy Land. The crusade culminated in the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. (Jupiterimages)

The call for a Crusade came from Pope Urban II in a speech given in Clermont, France, on November 27, 1095. Urban II (1088–1099) promised that anyone willing to travel to the Holy Land and restore Jerusalem to Christian authority would receive spiritual rewards, including guaranteed salvation and entrance into heaven. It is from this speech that we have the famous phrase *Deus vult*, or "God wills it." Initially, the focus was on saving the Holy Land from Muslims, who had first begun conquering territory belonging to the Byzantine Empire in the 600s CE. The Byzantines, at this time, had no plans for conquest, and the assumption may have been that the Byzantines would have Jerusalem and any other territory returned to them. The situation in the east was already well known by the time of Urban II's speech, and the pope had already traveled through France to raise support before this point. The Byzantines had lost Jerusalem in 638 CE, and in 1071 the Turks took the city from the Fatimid Caliphate. Since then, conditions in the city had worsened for Christians, and regional unrest had disrupted pilgrimages. The recovery of Jerusalem was, therefore, the perfect motivator.

Urban II's Crusade was in response to a call for help from the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118). Starting in the 1030s, the Seljuk Turks rose to

power. The Battle of Manzikert in 1071 was a significant loss for the Byzantine Empire. It fell to Alexius, who seized the throne by overthrowing Emperor Nicephorus III (r. 1078–1081) in 1081, to turn things around. That decade saw the losses of Nicaea (1081) and Antioch (1085). Beginning in the early 1090s, Byzantine control over Asia Minor rapidly disintegrated. In 1092, the assassination of Seljuk Sultan Malik-Shah occurred, and Alexius lost any chance of diplomatic negotiations. The emperor also faced internal opposition. In 1095, members of his court almost removed Alexius from power. He quickly realized that foreign assistance would be needed if he was to have any hope of keeping his throne.

Urban II had his reasons for agreeing to help Alexius. The ongoing conflict with Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV (1084–1105), known as the Investiture Controversy, had resulted in another pope, Clement III (1187–1191), backed by the German emperor. The Great Schism of 1054 had damaged the relationship between the Eastern and Western churches, and Urban II believed that reconciliation with Constantinople would raise his profile. In 1088, the pope lifted the excommunication that he had placed on Alexius, as a gesture of friendship. The Byzantine emperor returned the favor by sending relics to churches in the West. By 1095, there was enough goodwill on both sides to make a Crusade successful.

Following Urban II's speech, clergy helped spread the word throughout Europe. Several prominent figures joined the First Crusade: Raymond of Toulouse; Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, and his brother Baldwin of Bouillon; Robert, Duke of Normandy; Bohemond, prince of Taranto; Stephen of Blois; and Robert II, Count of Flanders. Each man saw himself as a leader, perhaps the leader, of the First Crusade. The leadership would change over time. Alexius would determine military objectives, and he also agreed to provide supplies and address other logistical issues. The force of the First Crusade consisted of approximately 80,000 soldiers, all of whom were required to swear an oath to fight for God. The Crusaders agreed to depart for Constantinople on August 15, 1096. Before they arrived, however, a second group of Crusaders arrived in the Byzantine Empire. Peter the Hermit organized his own force called the People's Crusade, a poorly managed group of civilians. As they marched east, their religious zeal caused them to massacre Jewish communities in Europe. This unfortunate incident was only the first sign of anti-Semitism as a factor in the First Crusade. When they arrived in Constantinople, Alexius was very disappointed in the People's Crusade as a military force. The standing armies, on the other hand, were all present in the city by 1097. According to the testimony of Alexius's daughter, Anna Comnenus, in her history, *The Alexiad*, the presence of such a great force outside Constantinople made the emperor nervous, and he separated the leaders from their armies by inviting them inside the city. Even so, there was some violence on the part of the force of Godfrey of Bouillon. Once in the capital, Alexius required the leaders to swear oaths to him. While many agreed, some refused and had to be bribed or threatened.

In 1097, the Crusaders set out for the city of Nicaea, and their siege was successful that summer. After Nicaea, the forces split into two groups and began moving through Asia Minor, facing little resistance. They captured Edessa before moving to the next primary target, the city of Antioch. As the siege wore on, the Crusaders began

running out of supplies. They also lost many soldiers to disease. However, they did have some close victories against the Turks. Tatikius, the Byzantine general accompanying the Crusaders, left for fresh supplies. The supplies did arrive, but Tatikius never returned. The Crusaders viewed this action as desertion, and they began to question whether Antioch was worth their suffering. When the city fell in 1098 and the Crusaders were able to get inside, a Turkish force led by Kerbogha (a Turkish military governor) immediately began to besiege Antioch. The sudden discovery of the Holy Lance boosted the Crusaders' morale, and Kerbogha suffered an unexpected defeat.

Alexius still had not joined the Crusaders as promised because his position in the capital was still fragile, and Pope Urban II had also declined a request to come to the Middle East. Without guidance, the Crusaders began thinking about keeping territory for themselves. Immediately, there was a rivalry over who should take charge of Antioch. Bohemond wanted to control it for himself, whereas Raymond of Toulouse still felt loyal to Alexius. Meanwhile, other leaders continued to conquer more territory, and the soldiers could follow whomever they wished. Eventually, Raymond of Toulouse gave in, and the Crusaders began marching on Jerusalem in 1099. The city was taken on July 15, followed by a massacre of the inhabitants, Muslim and Jewish. The city was entirely looted as well. Godfrey of Bouillon was put in charge of Jerusalem, and the Crusaders were able to defeat a Muslim force sent from Cairo.

It took some time for Jerusalem and the Crusaders to recover. Even before taking the city, the Crusader force had dropped to one-third of its original size. A new army left Europe in 1100 for Jerusalem, but the Turks wiped them out. Enough residents had fled the city that the economy began to stall, and Italian merchants from the West stepped in to fill the void. In 1100, Godfrey died, and his brother Baldwin

CRUSADERS CROSS

The Jerusalem Cross was first used as a coat of arms for the Latin Kingdom in Jerusalem. During the Crusades, it was referred to as the "Crusaders Cross." The four small crosses are symbolic of the four Gospels proclaimed to the four corners of the earth, beginning in Jerusalem; the large cross symbolizes the person of Christ.

The shape, color, and size of the crosses, as well as their position, were at first not of great concern but later became standardized and often made according to the affiliation of the Crusaders. In 1095, during his speech calling for a Crusade at Clermont, France, Pope Urban II specifically advised Crusaders to sew the cross on their right shoulder. The significance of the Crusaders Cross was interpreted differently by scholars. For some, it had mystic significance; for others, it represented devotion, protection, belonging to God, and repentance. Despite its many meanings, the symbol was most frequently interpreted as a sign of victory, encouragement, protection, and salvation. Finally, the cross was a sign or seal of the Crusader's vow and of his commitment to fulfil his obligation.

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was crowned king of Jerusalem. While Baldwin was still on friendly terms with the Byzantines, others continued to speak against Alexius, who they believed had abandoned them.

One member of the anti-Byzantine faction was Bohemond, who still held Antioch and began thinking of taking Jerusalem and Constantinople as well. In 1104, he returned to Europe for more soldiers. Three years later, he attacked the Byzantines at Epirus and failed. Regarding the surrender, Bohemond promised that Antioch would be returned to the Byzantine Empire after his death. He was also required to swear another oath to Alexius.

At the end of the First Crusade, the Crusaders had established European states in Tripoli, Edessa, Jerusalem, and Antioch. They returned to Europe as heroes, while Alexius was vilified for supposedly breaking his part of the oath.

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See also: *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; *Groups and Organizations*: Franks; Normans; *Key Events*: Great Schism; Islam, Expansion of; Manzikert, Battle of; *Objects and Artifacts*: Holy Lance; *Key Places*: Antioch

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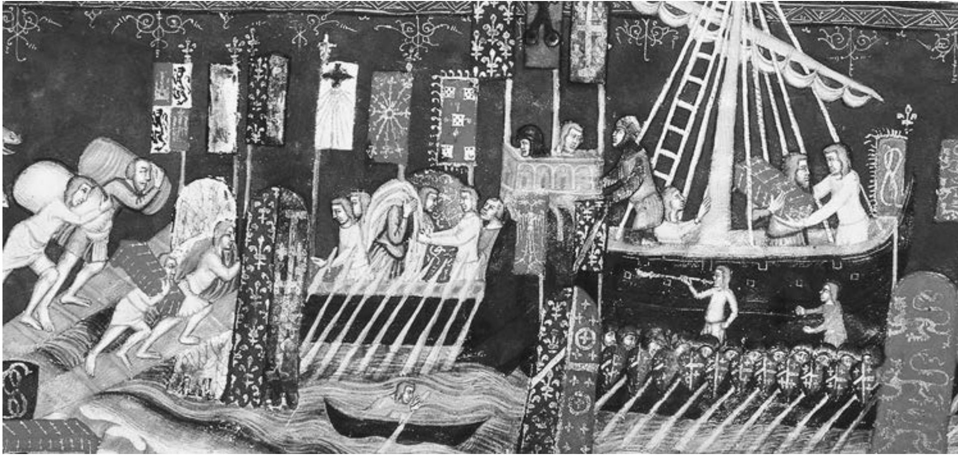
Fourth Crusade (1202–1204)

Pope Innocent III was elected in 1198, and he made a Crusade and the rescue of Jerusalem his primary focus. Both King Richard I of England and King Philip II of France were courted to lead the Crusade, despite active hostilities between the two countries. However, Richard I died before anything could be planned, and Philip II was at odds with Innocent III over the divorce of his second wife. Instead, leadership was to come from a group of French nobles. On November 28, 1199, a tournament was held outside Reims, France. The hosts, Count Thibaut of Champagne and Count Louis of Blois, publicly agreed to lead a Crusade, and others in attendance promised to join them. Count Baldwin of Flanders joined in 1200. Count Thibaut died in 1201 and was replaced by Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat, who was given total authority over the Crusader army.

The Crusaders themselves did not have a fleet of ships at their disposal, so they hired the Venetians to build a navy large enough to transport them to the Holy Land. Negotiations began with Doge Enrico Dandolo in 1201. The Venetian public supported the Crusade, so these talks went well. The Crusaders were to make four installment payments, with the last due in April 1202. Dandolo, in return, agreed to have the ships ready by July of that year. Additionally, the Crusaders agreed to first invade



The first three Crusades (1096–1192) launched by the Catholic West made limited headway against Muslim political powers, but they substantially increased tensions with the Byzantine Empire. This culminated in 1204 when Catholic Crusaders sacked Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. The victors imposed a Catholic emperor and patriarch on the city, which they held until 1261, when Orthodox Christians restored control of the city. In the aftermath, Byzantine hostility to the Catholic West was regularly greater than against Muslim states. (DeAgostini/Getty Images)

Egypt and capture Alexandria. Venice strongly desired the city for its commercial benefits, and it was to be given preference in future trade. This was kept secret from the average soldier, out of fear that there would be resistance to sailing anywhere except the Holy Land.

The agreement was for a force of 33,500 Crusaders, with the assumption that the funds raised would be enough to cover the cost of the navy. However, these numbers were anticipated, not the actual size of the Crusader force at the time the agreement was made. By 1202, only 11,000 soldiers had arrived in Venice. Many Crusaders were simply late in arriving. Others traveled to the Holy Land by other routes, since no one had been required to use Venice as the point of departure. Despite a smaller force, the Crusaders still owed Dandolo the same amount. The Crusade was effectively put on hold.

Dandolo, not wanting to be the person who stopped a Crusade, offered an alternative. If the Crusaders would aid him in capturing the city of Zara, the debt would be put on hold. At the time, Zara was under the rule of King Emeric of Hungary, whose rule was protected by the papacy and who also pledged himself to the Crusade. Innocent III warned the Crusaders that if they attacked the city, they would be excommunicated. This was not enough to dissuade the leadership. After a siege, Zara surrendered to the Crusaders in November 1202. The Crusaders asked Innocent III for forgiveness and, wanting the Fourth Crusade to continue, the pope relented. However, the Venetians remained under excommunication because they showed no remorse. In fact, they would destroy Zara before departing the next year.

The Crusader force stayed in Zara for the winter. In December, the Crusaders were approached by Prince Alexius, son of the deposed Byzantine emperor Isaac II. If the Crusaders agreed to help him attain the Byzantine throne, Alexius would repay them with a large sum of money and additional troops. Additionally, he guaranteed that he would make the Byzantine church submit to Rome. While the leaders of the Crusade supported the plan to go to Constantinople, the average soldier did not. Alexius had already sought help from Innocent III and was denied, and the pope was still opposed to any involvement. However, Prince Alexius assured the Crusaders that the public would support him, and that there would be minimal conflict. The Crusaders decided the mission must continue, no matter what had to be done. At this point, Innocent III effectively lost control of the Crusade.

In June 1203, the Crusaders arrived at Constantinople, where the usurper Alexius III held the throne. The emperor was wary of any confrontation. The Byzantine army outnumbered the Crusaders, but the navy was in poor condition. Immediately, it became clear that Prince Alexius did not have any support from the public, and an attack was planned for July. At Galata, the Byzantines retreated, and the chain protecting the harbor was broken so that a siege could begin. The Venetians were able to breach Constantinople's sea walls, and they started a fire that damaged much of the city. These losses switched popular support from Alexius III, who abandoned Constantinople the night of July 17. Before Prince Alexius could get inside, his father, Isaac II, had been returned to power. The Crusaders presented him with the prince's terms, which Isaac II agreed to uphold. Prince Alexius was crowned as Coemperor Alexius IV, and he began making payments to the Crusaders.

The Crusaders camped outside Constantinople to avoid any conflict with the public. However, the emperors went to great lengths to raise the funds they owed, and the loss of wealth caused resentment. Fights broke out between Byzantines and anyone from Europe, not just the Crusaders. In August 1203, a second fire much worse than the first lasted for days, and Europeans were blamed. Opposition to the emperors began forming around the figure of Alexius Ducas Mourtzouphlus. Meanwhile, for all their efforts, Isaac II and Alexius IV could no longer afford their payments, and the Crusaders began raiding areas outside the city. In December 1203, Byzantines began violently attacking Europeans in the city, and the partnership between Alexius IV and the Crusaders was severed.

In January 1204, a revolt started in the Hagia Sophia, where the public had a man named Nichlolas Kannavos declared emperor. Alexius IV became desperate and sought help from the Crusaders, and they would have responded because he was their only chance of getting more funds. But in the final days of January, Alexius IV was imprisoned by Mourtzouphlus before anything could be done. Mourtzouphlus had himself crowned as Alexius V. Kannavos was killed, and Isaac II died of natural causes. Anticipating an attack, Alexius V fortified Constantinople and cut off the Crusaders' access to the city. He also had Alexius IV executed.

Realizing that they could get what was owed to them only if it was taken by force, the Crusaders made Constantinople the new target of the Fourth Crusade. The March Pact was signed between the leaders, outlining what would happen if Constantinople

was captured. All loot would be shared equally, after the Venetians had been paid in full. Power would be shared between the Venetians and French, with the emperor coming from one party and the patriarch coming from the other. Venice was promised favorable trade terms, and the Crusaders would stay in the city until 1205 to secure power. Finally, all soldiers were required to swear an oath that the attack on Constantinople would be carried out virtuously.

On April 12, 1204, the Venetians managed to get their ships close enough to the city walls to send soldiers over them. The Byzantine army retreated, and a nearby gate was opened to let the entire force in. That night, Alexius V fled Constantinople, and the city formally surrendered the next day. Immediately, the Crusaders broke their oath to treat the city and its residents respectfully. They looted churches, including Hagia Sophia, and carried off relics and other valuables. Soldiers raped women of any age, including nuns. Any Byzantine who could get out of the city did so. Later sources would call the Crusaders worse than Muslims, and the sack of Constantinople damaged the relationship between East and West for centuries.

In the aftermath, Count Baldwin of Flanders was named emperor on May 16, 1204, establishing the Latin Empire, which lasted until 1261. He sent a letter to Innocent III to defend the sack of Constantinople, and the pope was ultimately pleased with the result. The empire's territory was divided among the most prominent Crusaders. Some Crusaders returned home or continued to the Holy Land on pilgrimage. Most important, the Crusaders never recaptured Jerusalem, or even made an effort.

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See also: *Key Events*: First Crusade; Second Crusade; *Objects and Artifacts*: True Cross; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Golden Age (Reign of Justinian I) (527–565 CE)

The nearly 40-year reign of Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) is considered the golden age of the Byzantine Empire. The reign saw great territorial expansion and military success, historical achievements in jurisprudence, and an excellent symbiosis of Christian religion and Greco-Roman culture.

Justinian's rise to the imperial throne started in 527 CE when he became a coemperor to his uncle, Justin I (r. 518–527 CE), who died later the same year. His rule is known as a restorative one due to his great efforts to strengthen the empire and return it to its glory of the old times. Despite his modest origins, Justinian climbed up to the

highest position in the imperial court as the most educated person of his era, a man of many talents, and the personification of the Roman universal idea. He acted wisely and collected a team of talented experts who assisted in all his major projects: Belisarius oversaw all important military campaigns, Tribonian led the process of codification of Roman law, and John the Cappadocian carried out all the substantial reforms in administration.

In the religious sphere, he was responsible for shaping church policy. As a stubborn defender of Christian Orthodoxy, he operated in several directions: to extinguish Greco-Roman paganism and to compete with the opposed Christian sects—Arianism and Monophysitism. He also confronted the papacy in 543 CE and kept tense relations between the East and the West.

In his foreign policy, Justinian launched one of the most aggressive military campaigns in the Middle Ages and recovered all the territories invaded by barbaric, Germanic tribes in Italy and North Africa. Initially he had attempted to establish good personal relations with Vandalic and Ostrogothic ruling families, but this just provoked a counterreaction. Therefore, in 533 CE, his general Belisarius departed for North Africa to fight against the Vandalic kingdom of Carthage. There were no obstacles for the Byzantine troops. Carthage was captured in 534 CE, and then Belisarius crossed over to Sicily and continued marching forward to southern Italy, heading to Rome. The Ostrogoths' resistance was firmer, but still in 540 CE, the Byzantine troops triumphantly entered the capital, Ravenna. His reconquest of the western provinces had as a result the restoration of Ravenna as the capital of Italy. This was not the end of the warfare on the Italian Peninsula, since it was prolonged for 20 years and left the lands totally devastated. Another army went to win possession of the southern coasts of Spain. As some historians say, by Justinian's death in 565 CE, the Mediterranean Sea was a Byzantine lake again, because Justinian controlled all the provinces around the Mediterranean. He created a new Roman Empire, ruled from Constantinople—the new Rome.

All this success on the battlefield was followed by extensive administrative and legal reforms, including territorial reorganization, new taxation systems, and the codification of *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, the code that nowadays represents the foundation of the Western legal system. The administrative measures were aimed to strengthen governing bodies, to fight against corruption, and, above all, to secure tax income. The principle of separating military and civil power in the provinces established by Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) was abandoned, and instead these two branches were joined, with the domination of one or the other depending on the type of province. These reforms were a period of transition from the old system to a new governing organization that would be introduced during the rule of Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE).

The great activity in Justinian's rule was noticed in economic policy by strengthening trade and handicrafts. Constantinople enjoyed its natural ideal geographic position and dominated the trade between two continents. The trade on the Mediterranean Sea was in the hands of Greek and Syrian merchants. Justinian's court tried to establish connections with China through the Crimea and Caucasus, having as a goal to

increase its influence in these regions. The issue of trade was the reason for the first contact with the Turks, who were spreading up to the northern parts of Caucasus and were confronted by Persia. Also, the Byzantine Empire made several attempts to secure the road to the Red Sea through the Indian Ocean, and therefore to intensify traffic in eastern waters. The land road to Middle Asia was rather difficult. The Byzantines discovered the secret of how to make silk to great success, and soon the Byzantine production of silk flourished in all the regions of the empire. It became an important industry, and its revenues were significant sources for the state.

The Nika Revolt at the early stage of Justinian rule resulted in the burning of all important civil and religious monuments of Constantinople. The damage allowed the emperor to rebuild many monumental works. Since almost the entire central area of the capital had been destroyed, the ceremonial part of the city was rebuilt in an amazingly short period of time. The impressive domed church of Hagia Sophia emerged in full splendor, displaying its complexity, innovative planning, and lavish decoration. All the building projects Justinian conducted were planned with an idea to turn Constantinople into a Christian capital. In addition to his patronage of architecture, he also supported production in decorative arts. Numerous examples were made during his reign, including exceptional icon paintings. Byzantine culture was flourishing in all its spheres, and even today those achievements stand out for their beauty and artistic significance.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Justinian I, Governmental Reforms of; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Key Events: Corpus Iuris Civilis*; Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Great Schism (1054)

By the 11th century, an official and final division between Eastern and Western Christianity was inevitable. The churches of Rome and Constantinople had been on different paths for hundreds of years. While it has been claimed that heavy imperial involvement in the East was to blame, some have argued that this assessment of the situation is incorrect. In general, the Byzantine emperors were some of the biggest supporters of a universal church. Some were even willing to recognize Rome as superior, in order to bring about a reunification. The Byzantines also wanted to keep

their claim to Italy, and reunification would help with that. In reality, there were two roadblocks to reunification. Compared with the East, the West was politically divided and had no interest in recognizing the Byzantine emperor as politically superior, something that was too tied up with Christianity in the East to separate. Furthermore, the Russian and Slavic churches had come to reject Rome in favor of Constantinople, which was now at the head of the Orthodox Church. Just prior to the Great Schism, Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople (999–1019) had stopped including the pope in the diptychs. In this period, Rome was very weak, and in 1024 the pope agreed to recognize the superiority of the Orthodox Church, but only in the East. As the papacy grew stronger and reformed itself, this agreement was rejected.

The Great Schism of 1054 came about because of four very old and long-debated issues. First, Rome taught that the Holy Ghost comes from both the Father and the Son, while the Orthodox Church taught that it came from the Father and passed through the Son. Second, Rome promoted fasting on Saturdays, while Constantinople did not. Third, Rome did not permit clergy to be married. Fourth, Rome used unleavened bread during Communion, while Constantinople used leavened bread. For all of these issues, Rome attacked Constantinople for what it viewed as heretical practices.

This illustration from a 16th-century Greek manuscript shows Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius, whose disagreements over Christian practices resulted in the Great Schism of 1054. The two men excommunicated each other and their supporters, resulting in a separation between the Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) churches that continues to this day. (DeAgostini/Getty Images)

Pope Leo IX was backed by Cardinal Humbert, who was hostile to Constantinople and its patriarch, Michael Cerularius. Early in life, Cerularius had conspired against Byzantine emperor Michael IV. He was exiled, and during this time he became a monk. Cerularius returned to the capital after the end of the Paphlagonian Dynasty and rose to power from there. Both sides were aware that the political desire at the time was for unification. The Normans had become a threat to both

GEORGIUS GEMISTUS PLETHON (1355–1450)

Georgius Gemistus Plethon was a famous Byzantine philosopher and humanist scholar. Born in 1355 in Constantinople, he studied there as well as at the Ottoman Muslim court near Adrianople. He is known as a founder of a school of esoteric religious philosophy at Mistra, where he died in 1450. As a state servant, he devised proposals for important social and governmental reforms for Byzantine Emperors Manuel II Palaeologus and John VIII Palaeologus. An important moment in his career occurred when he acted as lay theologian for the Byzantine delegation that assisted at the Council of Ferrara in 1438–1445. This council was convoked with the objective of reuniting the Latin and Greek churches, which had been separate since the Great Schism of 1054, to present a unified front against the rapid advance of the Ottoman Turks.

More interested in and focused on Neoplatonic philosophy than on religious issues, he presented to humanists attending the Council at Florentine his work on the differences between Aristotle and Plato. His treatise raised interest in Plato and inspired Cosimo de Medici, a Florentine banker and politician, to open a Platonic Academy in Florence. He was a multitalented person with a variety of interests, including music, astronomy, geography, history, and rhetoric, and he was extremely passionate about ancient Greece and culture.

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powers, and they knew that alliance was needed. Rome, however, believed that Byzantine emperor Constantine IX would not defend the Orthodox Church and forsake support from the West. On July 16, 1054, representatives from Rome entered the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. On the altar, they placed letters of excommunication against Cerularius and his supporters. In this instance, Leo IX and Humbert had miscalculated. Cerularius was, in fact, supported by Constantine IX Monomachus (r. 1042–1055), and the patriarch immediately issued excommunications of his own.

The oddest thing about the Great Schism of 1054 is that its severity was not immediately understood. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches were frequently at odds over one issue or another, and this was not the first schism to have occurred. What no one could foresee was that there would be no reunification after this point. Although the two churches would be friendly with each other from time to time, they remained out of communion with each other. Although the excommunications of 1054 were undone in 1965, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches are separated to this day.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Caesaropapism; Eastern Orthodox Church; Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Henoticon (482 CE)

In the early fifth century, the churches in the East were at odds over the nature of Christ. There were two dominant schools of thought by this time. The first was represented by Nestorius, an Antiochene and patriarch of Constantinople from 428 to 431 CE. He taught that Christ had two natures, human and divine, which remained separate. The human nature was emphasized. For this reason, the Nestorians—as they came to be called—refused to recognize Mary as the Theotokos, or Mother of God. Opposing Nestorius was Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria beginning in 412 CE. While Cyril also believed in the two natures of Christ, his writings argued that they united in some way, but without losing their individual characteristics. In fact, Cyril's inability to clarify his beliefs would become a sticking point for future religious disputes. The debate was reflective of the ecclesiastical rivalry between Antioch and Alexandria more broadly, which centered on how strictly to interpret scripture.

Cyril of Alexandria died in 444 CE. Shortly after, his writings were used by Eutyches to support his own theory of Christ's nature, which came to be called Monophysitism. The Monophysites taught that, upon the union of Christ's two separate natures, his humanity was subsumed into his divinity. This meant that Christ was no longer human, which had important implications for the meaning of the Crucifixion. The Monophysites did not see themselves as heretical, nor did they believe they were promoting a belief that Cyril would have disagreed with. They pushed a strict interpretation of the Nicene Creed, which describes that Christ was *consubstantial*, or of the same substance, with God. The creed says nothing about whether Christ is consubstantial with humanity. Eutyches was condemned as a heretic in 448, but Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria defended him the following year at a gathering in Ephesus, known as the Robber Council. Dioscorus believed that Nestorianism was more of a threat to the church.

The Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) was called by Eastern Emperor Marcian (r. 450–457 CE) to settle this debate. The emperor wanted a universal consensus, particularly with Rome and Constantinople—as the capitals of the empire—at the head of the church. Hundreds of bishops were in attendance, including the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. Pope Leo I did not attend but sent representatives. They agreed to participate under the condition that Leo I's Tome, a document written in support of Cyril's teachings and condemning Eutyches, was accepted as orthodox. According to the agreement reached, the Tome would be judged by Cyril's own writings, which were already orthodox.

At Chalcedon, Dioscoros answered for his defense of Eutyches by pointing out that Cyril of Alexandria himself spoke of Christ as a single being, suggesting that his two

natures could not be distinct. As the council's ultimate goal was to reaffirm Cyril's teachings, they decided that a new statement was needed. All existing creeds and documents were read aloud, in order to pinpoint the source of the disagreement. The creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople were accepted, as were Cyril's writings. Leo I's *Tome*, however, required further debate. The issue was with the Latin vocabulary of the document. When translated into Greek, it sounded Nestorian.

After some discussion, the *Tome* was accepted as orthodox. A statement was produced outlining the existence of Christ's natures according to Cyril's language, along with Mary as the Theotokos. However, the pope's representatives demanded a revision to make sure there was absolutely no conflict with the *Tome*, and this was backed by Marcian. Everyone else was opposed, finding the statement sufficient. Again, the issue was with the language used. However, the bishops were more concerned with condemning Nestorianism and Monophysitism. The final version, which was not meant to replace the Nicene Creed in any way, did its best to satisfy everyone. Nestorius and Eutyches were both declared to be heretics. Meanwhile, the writings of Cyril and Leo I, the moderates on the issue at hand, were upheld as orthodox. Christ was declared to have two natures, divine and human, brought together in unity while remaining distinct.

Another important outcome of Chalcedon involved the status of the church at Constantinople, which was officially elevated to a patriarchy and given control over Pontus, Asia, and Thrace. Rome objected to this, as the city was not recognized in the Nicene Creed, but it passed anyway.

Emperors Marcian (r. 450–457 CE) and Valentinian III (r. 425–455 CE) made acceptance of Chalcedon mandatory. Even so, there was a strong negative reaction to the council in the East. The Monophysites, believing that Chalcedon had drifted too close to Nestorianism and had not remained faithful to Cyril, revolted in Jerusalem and Alexandria. Rome and Constantinople remained invested in the outcomes of the council, as was the emperor Zeno (r. 474–475; 476–491 CE). In 475 CE, he had been momentarily deposed by Basiliscus, who was anti-Chalcedonian. Once back on the throne, Zeno looked for a way to end the fallout from Chalcedon and restore peace.

The *Henoticon* ("formula of union"), dated to July 28, 482 CE, was written by Zeno and sent to Alexandria. The edict upheld the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople, as well as Cyril of Alexandria's letter containing the Twelve Chapters. It restated the condemnation of Nestorianism but also mentioned Eutyches and Monophysitism, and it spoke of Christ as one being. Several years later, Zeno also closed the Nestorian school in Edessa, but by this time many of the Nestorians had left for Persia.

Through Alexandria's acceptance of the *Henoticon,* all churches in the East were brought back into communion with Constantinople. However, the peace was not to last very long. Peter Mongus of Alexandria declared his support for Chalcedon, but facing pressure from the Monophysites, he was forced to recant. Monophysites everywhere rejected the edict. Pope Felix III responded angrily to the *Henoticon* in 484, seeing it as an attack on Chalcedon. He excommunicated the patriarchs Acacius of Constantinople and Peter Mongus of Alexandria. While the anti-Chalcedonian Peter Mongus was an expected target, Acacius was punished for his friendliness with the Alexandrian. This came to be known as the Acacian schism. When Euphemius,

patriarch of Constantinople, attempted to mend relations with Rome in 495 CE, he was accused of being a Nestorian and removed. Curiously enough, the church of Armenia did accept the *Henoticon* as orthodox. The Armenians denounced Chalcedon and blessed Zeno for his work.

Zeno was succeeded by Anastasius (r. 491–518 CE), who first continued to promote the compromise found in the *Henoticon*. Later, he would come to emphasize the edict's rejection of Chalcedon. By 511 CE, the Monophysites had grown too powerful for Anastasius to ignore. A riot broke out in Constantinople after the Eastern liturgy was changed to become more reflective of Monophysite beliefs. Anastasius reacted by offering to step down. He never had to, as that move alone helped ease tensions. In 514, Zeno also dealt with the Chalcedonian rebel Vitalian.

Ultimately, the *Henoticon* was too vague and resolved nothing. The edict seemed to reject the Council of Chalcedon, despite reaffirming many of the council's decisions. Chalcedon continued to be controversial, and in some views it was too Nestorian. This fed the anti-Chalcedonian/Monophysite faction's popularity, and the nature of Christ continued to be disputed.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; *Individuals*: Zeno; *Groups and Organization*: Monophysites; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; Three Chapters Controversy; *Key Places*: Chalcedon

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Iconoclastic Controversy (711–843 CE)

The Iconoclastic Controversy was a theological dispute over the use of icons—religious images—in the eighth and ninth centuries that involved both the Byzantine church and the state. Iconoclasm literally means "image breaking" and refers to a repeated intention to break or destroy images for religious or political reasons. The interval from 711 to 843 CE is usually considered a period of severe crisis in the Byzantine Empire, marked by more than a hundred years of internal conflicts.

Icons are sacred images representing the saints, Christ, and the Virgin, as well as narrative scenes from their lives. The adoption of icons as symbols and decoration in

the sixth century was a sign of the transformation of Christianity as well as the Empire. At the early stage of development of the church, Christians used a minimal number of symbols, mainly inherited from Jews and pagans. In this period, the imperial court accepted religious images with great enthusiasm, especially those unmanufactured or supposedly created by divine intervention. Generally, there were two opposed opinions regarding the use of images; ones who believed it could lead to idolatry, while others considered their use as "books for the illiterate." Icons were used to communicate and transmit the faith in its various aspects. Even further, it was widely accepted that some images could acquire miraculous powers.

Iconoclasts were those who rejected images and strongly opposed worship of icons for various reasons, including the possibility of idolatry and the prohibition of images in the Old Testament, precisely in the Ten Commandments. On the other side were their adversaries, Iconodules, who defended the use of icons and insisted on their symbolic nature and on the dignity of created matter.

In the early phase of the church, making and worshipping images of Christ and saints was very popular, especially in the eastern provinces of the empire. The cult of icons spread rapidly and became one of the most important manifestations of Byzantine religious devotion. The opposition to this practice protested strongly, stating that the cult of icons was contrary to Christianity as a mainly spiritual religion. The disagreement with veneration of icons was powerful in provinces in the Far East, where Monophysite elements were still present, and in contact with Arabic world, hidden animosity against icons converted into open Iconoclasm. At the same time, the cross was promoted as the most acceptable decorative form for Byzantine churches.

The brief reign of Emperor Philippicus (r. 711–713 CE) was an ominous prediction of the major Iconoclastic crisis that was soon to follow. He was Armenian and supposedly a follower of Monophysitism. Philippicus did not take any measures to reestablish Monophysitism but came out openly in favor of Monothelitism. He rejected decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council and proclaimed Monothelitism as the only orthodox teaching. Symbolically, the image representing the Sixth Council was destroyed on the court and the inscription on the Milvian Gate remembering this meeting was removed. The emperor's politics found strong opposition in Rome, and as a response, all ceremonial procedures related to Philippicus's name were abandoned. Furthermore, the pope gave an order to exhibit pictures of all councils in Saint Peter's Church. This episode with images laid the foundation for future theological disputes over icons in the empire.

Emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE) was an Iconoclast, and his hostility toward icons had been explained by Jewish influence as well as Arabic. Before being introduced in the Byzantine Empire, Iconoclasm appeared first in the Umayyad Empire, where icons had been destroyed. Concurrently, an influential Iconoclastic group was formed, consisting of distinguished clergy members.

In 726 CE, Emperor Leo III declared publicly against worship of icons. He acted carefully and started convincing the population with his sermons. He explained that worship of icons opposed Christianity. Then upon the emperor's order, the icon of Christ was removed from the main gate to the Great Palace. This act provoked riots in

ICONS

Icons are sacred images representing Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, or saints—or narrative scenes from their lives. Today they are associated with wooden panel paintings in sizes similar to oil paintings, but in the Byzantine Empire icons could be crafted or carved in all available media, including marble; ivory; ceramic; gemstones; precious metals, especially silver and gold; enamel; textiles; frescoes; or mosaics. So-called "triptychs" had panels painted on each side that could be opened and closed. Icons ranged in size from the miniature to the monumental. While some were suspended around the neck as pendants expressing an individual's religion or devotion, others were part of church decoration as frescoes and mosaic images. Icons placed inside churches would describe and present to members of the religious community main theological issues and biblical scenes. The iconography and style varied throughout the centuries. According to Byzantine theology, contemplation of icons allowed the viewer communication with the sacred figures represented, and through icons an individual's prayers were addressed directly to the petitioned saint or holy figure.

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the capital as well as in other European provinces. Before taking any legal steps, he prepared thoroughly for the final decision and negotiated with church representatives. On January 17, 730 CE, he convoked in the emperor's court an assembly of all secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries to issue an edict against icons. The use of images was officially prohibited. He could not oblige the pope to adopt it and schism was inevitable, leading to very tense relations. Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), Leo's son and successor, was a fierce Iconoclast and he started open prosecution of icon venerators. For many decades of his rule, Iconoclasm was present and became even more radical and cruel. He surrounded himself with his followers and placed them in important church posts. Icon venerators and monks were persecuted, icons and relics were destroyed, and even the cult of Virgin Mary and numerous saints were prohibited. The overall situation was horrible and unbearable. The emperor's death left a legacy of terror in Byzantine society and the time of his reign was long remembered.

However, in 787 CE, Empress Irene (regent for son Constantine VI from 780 to 790 CE and sole ruler of the Byzantine Empire from 797 to 802 CE) convoked the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, the last accepted by the Eastern church, to condemn Iconoclasm and reestablish use of images. This period of adoration of icons did not last long, since Iconoclasts returned to power in 814 CE with the rule of Leo V (r. 813–820 CE). In the next year, at the council in 815 CE, icons were forbidden again. The second Iconoclastic period finished with the death of Emperor Theophilus (r. 829–842 CE), in 842 CE. In the following year, his widow, Theodora, restored veneration of icons.

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See also: *Individuals*: Irene; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Groups and Organizations*: Iconoclasts; Iconodules; Monophysites; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; *Primary Documents*: Document 19

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Islam, Expansion of

The expansion of Islam occurred primarily in the seventh and eighth centuries CE. With the end of the Umayyad Caliphate in 750 CE, Muslim Arabs had spread their religion from Arabia to Spain, North Africa, Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Persia.

Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born in 570 CE in Mecca. Muhammad was dissatisfied with Arabian paganism and influenced by Judaism and Christianity. As a result, Islam became tied to those two religions as another Abrahamic faith. According to tradition, while in a cave near Mecca, Muhammad was visited by the angel Gabriel multiple times. The messages delivered at these visitations were written down as the Koran. To avoid persecution, Muhammad and a small number of converts moved to Medina in 622 CE. In 629 CE, a Muslim force attacked the city of Muta and was defeated. Muta was in the frontier territory of the Byzantine Empire, and for Muslims, the battle represented the first clash with Christianity. Muhammad eventually became the city's leader and defeated Mecca in 630. Muhammad died in 632 CE, and the Arab Muslims rallied around Abu Bakr, the first caliph. During his reign, Muslims took control of Arabia.

At the time, the ruling powers in the East were the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires, both of which had become seriously weakened by continually going to war against each other. Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), the Byzantine emperor, defeated the Sassanids and signed a treaty with them in 628 CE. The war had shrunk the Byzantine army, and the best soldiers remained near Constantinople, leaving the eastern frontier undefended. Even after the truce, the Sassanids were still Heraclius's primary concern. The Byzantine Empire relied on a practice called defense-in-depth, which meant that troops would withdraw to fortified cities rather than engage an enemy. This strategy relied on enemy forces eventually exhausting themselves, a very advantageous policy to use against small raiding parties. However, it was not a good strategy to use against a massive and organized army.

During the first caliphate, called the Rashidun, the Arabs took advantage of the destabilized Byzantine frontier and attacked both the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires. In 636 CE, Arab forces defeated Heraclius at the Battle of Yarmouk, and the

city of Damascus surrendered to the Muslims shortly after. Following the battle, Heraclius withdrew from Syria entirely to focus on keeping Egypt under Byzantine rule. As the empire's forces left, they carried off any wealth they could find, damaging their relationship with the local populace. This decision, along with an Arab presence in both the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires, made the expansion of Islam move quickly. Heraclius also created an empty buffer zone along the frontier near the Taurus Mountains, something that the Arabs appeared to desire as well.

In 637 CE, Byzantine Antioch and Sassanian Ctesiphon fell to the Arabs. Jerusalem surrendered the following year, leaving a majority of Syria and the Levant under Islamic control. The Arabs signed a treaty with John of Osrhoene, agreeing not to cross the Euphrates River for one year in exchange for payments. Heraclius did not support this treaty, and when it expired in 639 CE, the Arabs invaded Mesopotamia. Edessa fell the same year, and then Egypt was invaded. The province held out until 642 CE, when Alexandria was the last city to fall. The Byzantines attempted to reconquer Egypt in 645 CE but failed.

Heraclius died in 641 CE, while the Arabs were still threatening the Byzantine Empire. Disputes over the succession limited the empire's ability to make decisions. Furthermore, the Byzantines had already begun to tie the loss of territory to contemporary religious conflict, particularly with the Monophysite sect. In this view, God was punishing the empire for heresy and sin by allowing the Holy Land to come under the control of nonbelievers.

BYZANTINE CLOTHING

Byzantine clothing styles inherited their basic forms from the Romans—the tunic and toga for men, and the *stola*, a type of long dress, for women. Shoe and hair styles also developed from Roman forms. During the late Roman period, and especially after the fall of Rome in 476 CE, the Byzantines started modifying their clothes by adopting decoration, ornaments, and color from the Orient and the Middle East. The key features of Byzantine clothing style were simplicity, modesty, and practicality. The Byzantines changed the Roman draping toga for the flowing dalmatica, a type of long tunic. Although women mainly wore the *stola*, they avoided displaying flesh with clothes and styles that covered as much of the body as possible.

The Byzantine trade with the Orient and the Middle East, which continued even after Islam began to expand into those regions, significantly influenced the overall aspect of Byzantine garments. Exotic fabrics, colors, ornaments, and patterns were integrated in Byzantine clothing styles. Deep blues, greens, reds, and yellows adorned the clothes of wealthy people, while purple was exclusively used for royal garments. Silk was especially adored by the Byzantines. When production of silk started in the empire, its use was widespread, and even a special type woven with golden threads was invented.

Among the most distinctive vestments developed by the Byzantines were those worn by the Christian clergy. Variations on everyday Byzantine garments like the dalmatica, for example, took on specified roles in religious practice. Clerical robes originated by the Byzantines are still worn today by clerics of the Orthodox Church.

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In the 650s CE, the Arab navy became the dominant force in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, attacking in 654 CE. The Arab and Byzantine navies met in the Battle of the Masts, near the coast of southwest Anatolia, in 655 CE. The Arabs were able to defeat the Byzantines by boarding their ships. The 650s CE also saw the surrender of Armenia, which came under Arab control in 652 CE. The Byzantines, however, were able to recover some parts of the country.

In 656 CE, Caliph Uthman was assassinated, throwing the Arabs into civil war and stalling the expansion of Islam. Byzantine Emperor Constans II (r. 641–668 CE) and Muawiyah, governor of Arab Syria, signed a peace treaty in 659 CE so that the latter could focus on his ambitions to become the next caliph. Constans took advantage of the circumstances to reorganize the Byzantine military into themes to better protect the empire. The themes were generally successful at preventing Arab expansion into Anatolia.

Muawiyah was victorious in 661 CE, establishing the Umayyad Caliphate, and expansion recommenced. The Arabs reconquered Armenia and began pushing eastward, conquering North Africa and attacking Sicily. The Umayyads placed Constantinople under siege twice, in 674–678 CE and 717–718 CE, but they failed to take the city. Greek fire, the secret weapon of the state, saved the Byzantine Empire both times. Although Islam's push into the empire had stopped, the Umayyads continued conquering territory elsewhere. They invaded Visigothic Spain in 711 CE, creating the province of al-Andalus. The Franks, however, halted farther Islamic expansion in Europe at the Battle of Tours in 732 CE. There Charles Martel, a Frankish leader, and grandfather of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman emperor, defeated an Arab force. When the Abbasid Caliphate overthrew and replaced the Umayyads in 750 CE, Spain remained under Umayyad authority.

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See also: *Individuals*: Heraclius; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with; Yarmouk, Battle of; *Military*: Greek Fire; Themes; *Key Places*: Egypt

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Justinian I, Reconquest of the West (527–565 CE)

When Justinian took the Byzantine throne, the empire extended north to the Danube River and east to the Black Sea and Euphrates River, and it included the Balkans,

Greece, and Egypt. Justinian's ambitions brought Sicily, North Africa, Italy, and southern Spain (territory bordering the Mediterranean Sea) back under imperial control. However, he did not intend to re-create the Roman Empire. Constantinople remained the capital, even after the capture of Rome.

The first target was North Africa. The Vandals had invaded in 429 CE, establishing their own kingdom. Justinian had initially hoped that the Vandals would submit peacefully. In 533 CE, the Byzantine general Belisarius arrived with 16,000 troops and attacked the Vandals at the city of Carthage. The Vandal king, Gelimer, surrendered in 534 CE, and Belisarius was given a traditional Roman triumph in Constantinople. North Africa was temporarily held by the Berbers, with a revolt in 544–548 CE. The Byzantines, however, were able to regain the territory quickly after that.

The Ostrogoths had ruled in Italy, supposedly on behalf of Constantinople, according to an agreement in 492 CE. Justinian knew that he faced potential opposition from both the papacy and the Italians. So, for the reconquest of Italy, Justinian's first move was to end the schism between the churches of Rome and Constantinople. He then began asserting imperial power in Italy. Justinian also tried to manipulate ongoing internal disputes over the Ostrogothic throne to his advantage, but in 534 CE he switched to military action. A Byzantine force invaded Dalmatia, also under the rule of the Ostrogoths. Belisarius and 7,500 troops invaded and easily conquered Sicily in 535 CE. King Theodahad was initially willing to submit to Justinian, but he then backed out of an agreement for fear of what his people might do to him. Coinage was minted showing the Ostrogoth king dressed as an emperor, and he also formed an alliance with the Franks, giving them the territory of Provence in exchange. Pope Silverius, who was elected in 536 CE, was also an ally.

The Byzantines crossed to Italy in 536 CE and captured Naples immediately. Theodahad was killed by his own people and replaced with King Vitiges. Silverius, meanwhile, negotiated a peace with Justinian. Belisarius was given entrance to Rome, the crown jewel of Justinian's efforts, in December of that year. Vitiges immediately besieged the city but was forced to withdraw in 538 CE, after Byzantine reinforcements from Greece arrived. During the siege, Silverius was accused of treachery. The pope was imprisoned and replaced with Vigilius in 537 CE.

The Ostrogoths retreated to northern Italy, and Belisarius continued his pursuit. Milan was captured in 538 CE, but Vitiges was able to retake the city the following year, resulting in a massacre of its residents. At this point, the Sassanian Empire became a military distraction for the Byzantines, as were an uprising in Armenia and conflict with Slavic peoples along the Danube River. Vitiges had actually sought help from Sassanian Emperor Chosroes, encouraging him to attack the Byzantine Empire and pointing out that success in Italy would only make Justinian a more formidable enemy. Belisarius placed the Ostrogothic capital of Ravenna under siege, and at the same time the Franks turned on the Ostrogoths.

Not wishing to fight two wars at once, Justinian offered terms of surrender to Vitiges. The Ostrogoths would be required to surrender southern Italy. Belisarius, however, refused to sign the treaty. Vitiges, seeing that the general had other ambitions, secretly offered a surrender if Belisarius would declare himself emperor.

Belisarius saw this as an opportunity, but not the one Vitiges had hoped for. Belisarius agreed to the terms and Ravenna was captured in 540 CE, but the general then took possession of the city in the name of Justinian. Belisarius was then recalled to the east to face the Sassanians.

Losing their capital, the Ostrogoths' resistance centered on the city of Pavia. In 542 CE, the Ostrogoths organized a campaign to retake their kingdom, under the leadership of King Totila. They won a great victory at Faenza that year. The year before, a pandemic of bubonic plague had broken out all across the Mediterranean world, and Justinian himself fell ill. Theodora stepped in, and Belisarius fell from favor. This left Byzantine Italy vulnerable, and in 543 CE Naples was lost. When Justinian recovered, Belisarius was again sent to Italy. The war with the Sassanians ended in 545 CE, leaving the emperor free to refocus his efforts in the West.

Belisarius had made no headway in eliminating the Ostrogoth presence in Italy. Rome was captured by Totila in 546 CE, then retaken by the Byzantines in 547 CE, then recaptured by Totila in 550 CE. Totila sent terms of peace, but Justinian refused them. In response, the Ostrogoths invaded Sicily. In 548 CE, Belisarius's wife, Antonina, had been sent to Constantinople to ask for reinforcements. However, Theodora died that same year, leaving Justinian grieving and unable to act. Belisarius was recalled to Constantinople. A force was organized under Germanos, the potential heir or coemperor of Justinian, but he died before making it to Italy. The general Narses was sent instead, and a fresh force arrived at Ravenna in 552 CE. At the battle of Busta Gallorum in 552 CE, Narses defeated King Totila, who was killed. The final Byzantine victory came at Mons Lactarius, and Ostrogoth power was broken. The Byzantines took their time eliminating resistance in Italy. Verona, the final Ostrogoth holdout, fell to the Byzantines in 561 CE.

As the war in Italy carried on, Justinian sent Liberius to Visigothic Spain in 551–552 CE. The emperor chose to take advantage of a civil war, backing the Visigoth Athanagild. The Byzantines continued to hold parts of Spain after their intervention, much to the displeasure of their ally.

Out of the territorial gains made under Justinian, Italy was the first to be lost. The emperor died in 565 CE and was succeeded by Justin II. The Lombards, rich from a victory over the Gepids in Dacia, invaded Italy in 568 CE. The Byzantines lost everything except Ravenna, Venice, Calabria, and Sicily. Spain was held until 624 CE. Byzantine control of North Africa lasted until the Arab conquests of the mid-seventh century.

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See also: *Individuals*: Belisarius; Justinian; Narses; Theodora; *Key Events*: Rome, Fall of

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Manzikert, Battle of (1071)

The Battle of Manzikert occurred in 1071, near the Armenian city of Manzikert and close to Lake Van, where the Byzantine army led by Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes (r. 1068–1071) was defeated by Seljuk Turks headed by Alp Arslan. It was a decisive battle because the resulting disintegration of Byzantine border defense opened the region of Anatolia for Turkish incursion, and thus a new period of Islamic expansion was introduced.

The Battle of Manzikert was not the first time in the Byzantine history that Muslim forces had defeated the Byzantine army. As early as 674 CE, the Umayyad Caliphate had turned to a conquest of the Byzantine Empire. Still, circumstances changed in favor of the Byzantines when the Umayyad Caliphate was overthrown in 750 CE and was replaced by the Abbasid Dynasty. The new dynasty suspended the ambitious plans for total conquest of the Byzantine Empire, instead opting for smaller military incursions, only sometimes penetrating deeply into the Anatolian plateau.

The movement of the Seljuk Turks into Anatolia had begun with their spread through central Asia, in the form of waves of tribal incursions. Essentially nomadic, the Seljuks converted to Islam at the turn of the 10th century. The Seljuk Turks crossed into Armenia in the early 11th century and traveled deep into Anatolia, reaching the Byzantine port city of Trebizond on the Black Sea coast in 1054. Step by step, the Seljuks were elevated from nomadic tribes to masters of a large and modern empire. In 1063, Alp Arslan became the sultan of the Seljuk Turks, and his domain covered much of Persia and Iraq. Initially, the Byzantine territory was not Arslan's goal, but having heard about movement of Diogenes's troops in Anatolia, he was forced to change direction of his army and meet the Byzantines at nearby Lake Van.

General Romanus Diogenes became emperor after marrying Empress Eudocia, a widow of Emperor Constantine X Ducas (r. 1059–1067), who, on the other hand, was a regent for son Michael. For Eudocia, a person from a distinguished military family was a perfect choice to protect the state from the Turkish menace and to secure succession of her family to the throne. He immediately initiated fighting with the Seljuks because he was prompted by their frequent incursions in Anatolia, which was under Byzantine rule at that point. He gathered an army comprising mainly mercenaries. The forces that were about to confront Alp Arslan were disintegrated military and politically, because many among them were eager supporters of the Ducas family and openly against the emperor.

To reestablish security of the eastern frontier of the Byzantine Empire, the emperor led his army to Turkish-dominated Armenia, deeply convinced that military victory

would help him demonstrate his superiority over the Ducas family. The main reason for Diogenes's decidedness to fight the Seljuk forces was his firm belief that his army was considerably greater in number than the Muslim forces. What he did not consider was the suspicious loyalty of his soldiers and their inclination to support the Ducas imperial line.

Diogenes divided his troops in two near the town of Manzikert and sent one part to secure the fortress on Lake Van, and the other to enter Manzikert. Alp Arslan did not wait long, ordering his army to march on Manzikert. The emperor's predictions were not correct as Turkish forces appeared from different directions. To avoid disaster, the Byzantine emperor went back to reunite his forces, but they were trapped in the valley near the fortress. Despite his bravery, the emperor was destined to lose. Some of his Norman mercenaries refused to fight, and others, Turkish horsemen, changed sides the night before the battle. One of his distinguished generals, Andronicus Ducas, the emperor's political rival and member of the Ducas family, left with his soldiers, considering the battle lost. The Byzantine forces were destroyed, and Romanus Diogenes was taken prisoner.

The imprisoned emperor managed to reach an agreement with the Seljuk sultan. To secure his own freedom with ransom, he agreed to pay annual fees to the Seljuks as well provide them with military support. However, influential representatives in Constantinople did not acknowledge this agreement, so the emperor was dethroned.

The importance of the Battle of Manzikert lies mainly in the political effects that it had within Constantinople. It can be cited as one of the main reasons for the civil war that was about to burst and last for more than two decades. Also, this sometimes-called "Dreadful Day" is one of the greatest reasons both for the rise of the Muslim Seljuk Turks and the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 at the hands of the Ottomans.

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See also: *Organization and Administration***:** Recruitment; *Groups and Organizations:* Muslims; *Key Places*: Byzantium

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Milvian Bridge, Battle of (312 CE)

The battle between Maxentius (r. 306–312 CE), the Praetorians, and the forces of Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE) at the Milvian Bridge, which occurred on October 28, 312 CE,

provides a stepping-off point for the establishment of the Byzantine Empire. It started with Constantine's consolidation of power from Diocletian's ill-fated Tetrarchy. This led to the sole emperorship of Constantine and the subsequent founding of Constantinople in 330 CE. Although Constantine did not make Christianity the religion of his realm, his establishment of it as a legal religion following the Battle of the Milvian Bridge paved the way for later emperors to declare it the religion of the entire empire (Edict of Thessalonica 380 CE enacted by Theodosius I, r. 379–395 CE). Without Constantine's victory at Milvian Bridge, there might never have been a Byzantine Empire as we know it today.

In the third century, Emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) (and fellow Emperor Maximian, r. 285–305 CE) retired and left power to four emperors, instead of selecting only one. This led to four different emperors in charge of large standing armies. Historians refer to this period as the Tetrarchy. The combination of four strong leaders with large armies was unsustainable. An intense series of civil wars followed. The period began in 290 CE and ended in 324 CE with Constantine I's defeat of Licinius I (r. 308–324 CE) in 324 CE. This string of civil unrest included the Battle of the Milvian Bridge.

The power politics surrounding the Tetrarchy played a large role in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The Milvian Bridge sits about 20 miles north of Rome. Diocletian did not visit Rome until he had been in office for 20 years. He kept his capital at Nicomedia. This left the Praetorian Guard in Rome in position to gain power overtime. They had chosen the emperor many times in the third century. Meanwhile, Maxentius (r. 306–312 CE), son of former Emperor Maximian, felt snubbed by not being declared one of the Tetrarchy when it was established. He sought and gained the support of the Praetorian Guard. They opposed much of what Diocletian did. He neglected Rome. More specifically, he disbanded the Praetorians and replaced them with a new Imperial Guard, the *Scholae Palatinae*. The Praetorians and other Roman supporters declared Maxentius emperor in 306 CE.

Constantine sought to challenge Maxentius's ascension and consolidate the power of Rome. He gathered an army of approximately 100,000 men and set on a march south toward Italy. His force was made of Britons, Gauls, and Germans. His forces entered Italy from the west. He captured the key cities of Turin, Milan, and Verona. Then, his army turned to Rome. Maxentius sent out scouts and small units of his forces, and they saw initial success. Constantine's army would face the bulk of Maxentius's forces at the Milvian Bridge, which crossed the Tiber River. The *Scholae Palatinae* joined Constantine as his royal guard. The Praetorians fought alongside the forces of Maxentius.

Maxentius repelled attacks on Rome before. In these battles, he remained inside the walls of the city and left the fighting up to his senior commanders. This proved successful against two other original members of Diocletian's Tetrarchy. Severus (r. 305–307 CE) and Galerius (r. 305–311 CE) both sought to capture Rome in 307 CE. The Battle of Milvian Bridge saw Maxentius abandon this practice. Historians differ on his reasoning, but he chose to fight alongside his troops in 312 CE. Some say that Maxentius faced public ridicule over not taking the field. Others say that he feared

Constantine marched to power by defeating every legitimate ruler that stood in his way. He first took control of the empire's western provinces by defeating his rival Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge on the Tiber River in 312 CE, dedicating this triumphal arch in Rome after that victory. In 324 CE, Constantine defeated his last rival, Licinius, at Chrysopolis, and began the foundation of Constantinople nearby as his victory monument there, with the entire empire now under his control. (Matthew Herbst)

flagging public support of his claim as emperor. At least one historian claims that he took the advice of an oracle. There is also a theory that Maxentius looked to embody the legendary Roman hero Horatio and his defense of the bridge found in Titus Livius's famous history, *Ab Urbe Condita* ("From the Founding of the City of Rome").

With Maxentius leading them, his forces devised a plan that included destroying part of the bridge and replacing it with a pontoon bridge. This would enable them a quick retreat and a method to ensure that Constantine's forces did not reach Rome. The plan was a disaster. Maxentius's forces were routed. His forces all tried fleeing across the narrower, unstable, temporary bridge, and a bottleneck occurred. In the pandemonium, Maxentius fell into the Tiber and drowned. Constantine's forces cut down the Romans who waited their turn to cross the bridge. Additionally, nobody cut the ropes holding the pontoon together. When Constantine victoriously entered Rome the next day, one of his commanders carried Maxentius's head on a pike. There are historical accounts that Constantine himself rode down Maxentius and took his

head. This is improbable. It is more likely that his body was found in the river and beheaded postmortem.

The Battle of the Milvian Bridge illustrates the most dangerous of all military operations: a withdrawal. Strategically, the plan probably looked like artistry, a sure way to prevent Constantine's forces from entering Rome. Tactically, it looks unrehearsed and haphazard. This might be attributed to a variety of factors. First, Maxentius did not have ample military experience. He served in few imperial military posts. This was part of the reason he was passed over for the emperorship he sought. Furthermore, his earlier decisions to remain in Rome while his troops fought deprived him of military experience. Second, withdrawals are tactically risky. The orderly removal of units from a battle area demands a high level of both coordination and discipline. Some forces must stand and fight waiting their turn while others leave. Third, the planning was horrible. A mass retreat over an unstable rope bridge at a full gallop by cavalry is unthinkable. No less a mistake was the failure to make sure the ropes were cut in the event of such a retreat. A successful withdraw hinged on it.

Constantine took power over the whole of the Western Empire in the aftermath of the battle. He also inflicted retribution on the Praetorians. He destroyed their camp at Castra Praetoria (barracks of the Praetorian Guard), literally razing every building. He disbanded their cavalry and sent the rest out into the field army. After defeating his eastern rival, Licinius, in 324 CE, Constantine would reunite the entire empire under his rule and establish his new capital, Constantinople, in 330 CE. Although Constantine granted only toleration to all Christians, he paved the way in 380 CE for Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE) to declare Christianity as the religion of all Romans, including the later-coined Byzantines. Thus, out of the Battle of Milvian Bridge sprung what would later be regarded as the Byzantine Empire.

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See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Praetorian Guard; *Key Events*: Thessalonica, Edict of; *Military: Scholae Palatinae*

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Nicaea, Council of (325 CE)

The strongest and probably most important manifestation of the Christianization of the Roman Empire during the rule of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) was the summoning of the Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325 CE. It was the first

ecumenical church council to lay the foundations for the canonical and dogmatic system of the Christian Church.

At the beginning of the fourth century, Constantine the Great permitted Christians to worship without hiding and gave them some privileges, such as building churches and exempting Christian clergy from taxation and onerous public duties (the *sordida munera*). Although still not Christian, Constantine was involved in all the disputes over religious issues. Constantine the Great met Licinius (r. 308–324 CE), who controlled the Balkans, and in 313 CE signed the Edict of Milan, a document that gave Christianity a legal status and granted all citizens of the Roman Empire the freedom to worship whatever deity they pleased.

In 325 CE Constantine mustered the empire's bishops for the Council of Nicaea, the first ecumenical council, to clarify issues of Christian theology. The main issue was a division within the church over the understanding of the relationship between Jesus (the Son) and God (the Father). Ultimately, the council would issue the Nicene Creed, a theological statement declaring that the Son was of the same nature (*homoousios*) as the Father. (Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images)

The emperor convoked the council, presided over it, and heavily influenced its decisions. Although he was not yet a member of the Christian community—he was baptized/converted on his deathbed—he was its real leader and gave the example to his successors on the Byzantine throne.

The main issue for discussion at the council was the heretical teachings of an Alexandrian priest, Arius, whose theological doctrine is known as Arianism. He was a leader of the Christian community in Alexandria and attracted a significant number of followers. By accepting an extreme monotheistic approach, he accented the absolute oneness of the divinity, God, and did not recognize the equality of the Son with the Father, meaning he did not acknowledge Jesus as God. Nevertheless, the council decided that the Father and the Son are of the same substance. Consequently, Arius was condemned by the Council of Nicaea, and Christian dogmas were defined.

The collaboration of the state and the church was beneficial for both sides, yet it brought some new, difficult problems. The Roman-Byzantine Empire, on one hand, found in Christianity the power that could bring spiritual unity, and its imperial absolutism secured moral support. The church, on the other hand, received financial

support and backing from the state for its missionary work and assistance in the fight against church adversaries or factions, by gaining a protector in the form of the empire. Observing the new circumstances from a negative perspective, the empire, being tied to the church, became involved in the conflicts between different factions. Religious fights were not only the matter of church anymore, but aggravated by political issues, they were converted into an essential element of the ecclesiastical and political development. Furthermore, the imperial and ecclesiastical goals did not always overlap. Consequently, the empire's participation in religious conflicts—the intertwining interests and collaboration as well as the opposition between the empire and the church—appeared during Constantine's rule.

The decisions of the Nicene council did not yet defeat Arianism. At the beginning, the emperor underrated the power of the opposition, so he had to change his tactics and readmit Arius into the religious community. This act put him in conflict with the Orthodox clergy, in the first place with Athanasius the Great, the bishop of Alexandria from 328 CE. Despite being banished on several occasions, Athanasius fought fiercely for the Nicene Creed until his death.

The religious problem worsened the relations between Constantine's sons and deepened the gap between the eastern and western parts of the empire. Constantius II (r. 337–361 CE) was the head of the eastern part and a supporter of Arianism, while Constantine II (r. 337–340 CE), who died in 340 CE, and young Constans I (r. 337–350 CE), who ruled in the West, were followers of the Nicene Creed. A church council was convoked in 343 CE in Serdica on the border of the two empires, and it

JULIAN CALENDAR

The Julian calendar is a dating system established by Julius Caesar as a reform of the complicated Roman civic calendar. By the 40s BCE, the Roman calendar was three months ahead of the solar calendar; Caesar, therefore, decided to adopt a new, more precise one. Advised by the Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes, Caesar introduced the Egyptian solar calendar, which took the length of the solar year as 365 1/4 days. The year was divided into 12 months, all of which held either 30 or 31 days, except February, which contained 28 days except every fourth year, when it had 29 days. However, Sosigenes had overestimated the length of the year by 11 minutes and 14 seconds. Nevertheless, by 325 CE, when the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea met, the actual spring equinox was falling on March 21 instead of the original March 25. At Nicaea, the church decided to accept the Julian calendar with its acknowledged flaws and to set the date of the equinox at March 21. In 1582, the Gregorian calendar was introduced, which restored the calendar to the seasonal dates of 325 CE, an adjustment of 10 days. The Julian calendar has been gradually abandoned since 1582 in favor of the Gregorian calendar. The current discrepancy between the Julian and Gregorian calendars is 13 days. Some Eastern Orthodox churches (Russian, Serbian, Jerusalem, Ukraine, Georgia) continue to use the Julian calendar for determining fixed liturgical dates. Nearly all Eastern Orthodox churches use the Julian calendar to establish the dates of movable feasts, such as Easter.

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did not bring a peaceful solution. The more powerful younger brother, the ruler of the West, forced Constantius to surrender and allowed the return of the dismissed bishops. After that, Arianism went through a period of crisis, having been politically defeated and split into two factions. The radicals stayed firmly tied to Arianism, and their leader was the extremist Eunomius.

Another turning point occurred when, in 350 CE, Constans died in battle with the usurper Magnus Magnentius, and soon after Constantius defeated the same usurper. The victory of the eastern emperor made this part of the empire important. Following his father's idea, Constantius aimed to make Constantinople equal with Rome, which was in fact the suppression of pagan Rome in favor of the Christian Constantinople. When visiting Rome, he required the altar of the goddess of victory to be removed from the hall of the Roman Senate.

Constantius's triumph was the victory of Arianism. The emperor exercised infinite power at the court as well as in the church. Opponents were repressed, and during the councils in Sirmium and Rimini, Arianism was proclaimed the imperial religion (359 CE). Eunomius and his followers under the protection of the emperor became the governing group. Apart from this temporary triumph of Arianism in the Byzantine Empire, more important was the fact that during this period, the Goths were converted to Christianity by the Arian Gothic Bishop Ulfilas and they received a new faith in the Arian form.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria; Constantine the Great; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; *Primary Documents*: Document 8

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Nika Revolt (532 CE)

The Nika Revolt broke out in Constantinople in 532 CE during the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) because of strong confrontations between autocratic central power and political factions in the city. The revolt was named "Nika" after a motto used by rebels meaning "victory" or "conquer" in Greek, an exclamation that was used during races to support charioteers.

In the fifth century, the number of festivals and spectacles increased, and any type of entertainment was extremely popular. Followers and fans of these events would form associations or organizations. "Demes" (their original name) were sports, as well as political organizations. They were genetically connected to the old Hippodrome parties, and their names were related to the colors of Hippodrome chariots. Initially, there were four parties, but the Reds merged with the Greens and the Blues with the Whites. The Hippodrome in Constantinople was similar to the Circus in Rome and the Agora in Athens. The chariot races were associated with the imperial cult and served as the main stage for people's aspirations. The associations of the Greens and the Blues had important public functions serving as city police or by participating in construction of city walls. Their leaders were named by the imperial court. The population in Constantinople would gather around the associations, and belonging to one would signify support to one side and opposition to other. Therefore, the Blues and the Greens played a significant role both in public and political life.

The Blues and Greens became the predominant organizations, and as at today's soccer competitions, during the matches they would sit on opposite sides of the stadium, address the emperor, and expect his response. Some experts believe that the Blues were representatives of the upper classes, while the Greens of the lower. Others maintain that both demes were composed of various classes of the urban population, and their antagonism could be explained by the fact that the leading persons of the Blues were representatives of old Greco-Roman Senate aristocracy. Meanwhile, the Greens were composed of a new class of civil servants who were successfully climbing up the ladder and a class of merchants, mainly from eastern regions of the empire.

Since the middle of the fifth century CE, political life in the empire was marked by constant confrontations of these two factions. The imperial court was forced to consider them as an influential political factor and even to rely on association with one or the other. Therefore, one side would usually enjoy support and the other would remain exposed to repression. Sometimes, the two parties would unite in a mutual fight against the court, opposing its absolutism and firm centralism.

The Hippodrome itself was a place of turbulent protests, and the emperor was frequently subjected to the insults of the gathered population. Riots were not unusual, and there were occasions when emperors were put in dangerous positions and forced to take a step back and concede.

During the reign of Emperor Justin I (r. 518–527 CE), Justinian supported the Green sports association, which was backing his political views regarding the Orthodox Church. But when he came to power, he wanted to liberate himself from their influence, so he took severe measures against city organizations. These measures strongly affected the associations and made them into Justinian's enemies. At the same time, the empire was not in a favorable situation because Justinian's foreign policy and long warfare required huge financial resources. This and the outbreak of plague put the city's population in a very difficult position.

A few days before the riot, three men were imprisoned because of a disturbance created during chariot races. Therefore, the two parties merged once again against the central power, demanding their release. Since their wish was not fulfilled, they started

destroying everything in their path. The revolt spread and the capital ended up in flames. Even the church of Hagia Sophia collapsed. Justinian was totally discouraged. He was inclined to accept their petition, and even to leave the throne and the city itself. Thanks to the people who surrounded Justinian—his wife, Theodora, and military leaders Narses and Belisarius—an expected defeat was turned into a positive situation for the emperor. The crucial factors that saved the throne were Theodora's braveness, Narses's skills, and Belisarius's determination. While Narses was negotiating with the rebels, Belisarius broke into the Hippodrome with troops loyal to the emperor and killed the surprised rebels. A horrible massacre of thousands of people ended the revolt within the walls of the Hippodrome.

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See also: *Individuals*: Belisarius; Justinian; Narses; Theodora; *Groups and Organizations*: Demes; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Hippodrome (Constantinople); *Primary Documents*: Document 17

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Persia, Wars with (fourth–seventh centuries)

From the fourth to the seventh century, the two main forces that dominated in the Near East were the Byzantine Empire and Persia, the Empire of Sassanid Iran. They respected each other as powers, and apart from occasional confrontations, they were able to negotiate and even to collaborate sometimes. During these 300 years, the Byzantine emperors failed to conquer Persia despite their huge ambitions and the campaigns that had started. Unwillingly, the Byzantines were forced to hand over Armenia to Persia. This region was a borderline between the two states and a place of many conflicts. Both countries were constantly engaged in their own problems. Therefore encounters on the battlefield were rather insignificant.

The Byzantine emperors of the fourth century still cherished the ambitions of conquering Persia. Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) died without organizing the campaign. His successor, Julian (r. 361–363 CE), initiated the expedition to Lower Mesopotamia but died during the retreat. The next emperor on the throne, Jovian

(r. 364–365 CE), was in a difficult position and had to accept demands from Persian leader Shapur II. According to those requests, the Byzantines had to withdraw from Nisibis and Upper Mesopotamia and grant freedom to Armenia. The only conflict during the reign of Valens (r. 364–378 CE) was terminated with the decision to divide Georgia between the two empires. During the fifth century, both sides had their own state issues and therefore maintained peaceful relations. Persians were under attacks of invaders from the Asian steppes, so on several occasions they asked for financial assistance from the Byzantine Empire.

At the beginning of the sixth century, hostilities resumed. Persian King Kawada was just restored and needed financial aid to reward his helpers. When Emperor Anastasius I (r. 491–518 CE) rejected his requests, Kawada occupied several cities and even devastated the territories. As expected, the Byzantines had to respond, so they gathered an army and fought back. Kawada was in an unfavorable position, and he had to make an agreement with the Byzantines. He was unable to intervene and stop the construction of the new fortress of Dara on the frontier. During the reigns of Justin (r. 518–527 CE) and Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), the politics were firm, and a series of hostilities was terminated with the Eternal Peace in 532 CE. According to it, Justinian agreed to make a single payment to Persians to secure an extended truce. Aware of the circumstances in the Byzantine Empire and, knowing the fact that its troops were transferred to Italy and North Africa to fight against Vandals and Goths, in 540 CE Khosrow I (531–579 CE) captured various Roman cities, including Antioch itself. Regardless of a series of cease-fires, battles continued in the region of the Caucasus until 561 CE. Then another peace agreement was concluded, but this time it was an obligation of the Byzantines to pay annual fees to secure their eastern border. This contract persisted for 10 only years because Justin II (r. 565–78 CE) found it disgraceful and inappropriate. Supported by Turks and diplomatic maneuvers, he initiated a new war in 572 CE. The Persians made significant progress in a short period of time and captured Dara. Still, instability in their territory caused the fall of Hormizd IV. Energetic Emperor Maurice (r. 581–602 CE) was clever enough to take advantage of this situation. He backed Hormizd's son, Khosrow II (r. 590–628 CE), and allowed him to seize power in Iran. Logically, the war was brought to a favorable end for the Byzantines in 591 CE. Only one decade later, in 602 CE, when Maurice was overthrown, Khosrow II had the perfect excuse to enter Byzantine territory in the role of an avenger. Persian forces advanced gradually and occupied all imperial eastern provinces.

When in 610 CE Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) came to power, the Byzantine Empire was experiencing a complete collapse in economy, administration, and military organization. The first decades of the seventh century were marked by Slavic colonization of the Balkan Peninsula, which drastically changed the ethnic composition of the population. At the same time, Persian invasion in Asia was spreading despite the attempt to organize a counteroffensive. Imperial forces were defeated at Antioch, allowing Persians to advance vigorously. The fall of Damascus was a terrible setback for the Byzantine Empire. The siege and fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the Persians in 614 CE was an even bigger blow for the Christians. Persian forces took over all

Byzantine provinces and annexed Egypt. This region was important for the Byzantines as a main wheat-producing area.

In the period of hardships, the empire finally started a process of international recovery and improvement. These critical years brought reorganization in the administrative system and military forces. Because of these changes, the empire began to rise from the ashes. Finally, Heraclius was able to collect forces capable of striking back, and in 623 CE, he entered in another war with Persia. The emperor's first task was to reconquer Armenia. Afterward he established relations with the tribes from the Caucasus and reinforced his army. This initial incursion into Persia was not successful because the Persians started counterattacking and reached the Bosporus. Constantinople was under a double threat: Persians and Avars. In the sea battle that followed, the Byzantines destroyed the Avars, and that was a sign for Persia to act. Heraclius was ready for the great offensive, which reached the heart of the Persian kingdom in 628 CE. The great victory of the Byzantine forces and breakdown of Persia made Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and a portion of Mesopotamia again a part of the Byzantine Empire.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Individuals*: Heraclius; Justinian; Maurice; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Military*: Greek Fire; *Key Places*: Byzantium; Egypt

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Rome, Fall of (fifth century)

The final days of the Roman Empire are usually assigned to the year 476 CE, when the German general Odoacer (Odovacar) deposed "the last Roman Emperor," a boy ironically named Romulus Augustulus (Augustus). Therefore, when we speak about the fall of the Roman Empire, we refer to the fall of one city, Rome. Many historians consider the fall of the empire as the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the Middle Ages.

Several developments contributed to the fall of Rome, both external and internal, and debate among professionals continues to the present day. One of explanations is the rise of the new religion. Christianity was a monotheistic religion opposed to the

traditional Roman religion, which was polytheistic (many gods). At the beginning of the third century, Emperor Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) declared tolerance for Christianity and later proclaimed it an official religion. Rising popularity of the new religion changed the attitude toward the emperor. In the Roman Empire, the emperor was a god, but Christians believed in one god, and this one was not the emperor. Thus, authority of the emperor became significantly weaker. The western part of the empire originally had its capital at Rome, but later western emperors abandoned Rome for more strategically located cities such as Milan and Ravenna. The eastern portion had its new capital, Constantinople, named after the emperor. Previously, Constantine had defeated the emperor of the east, Licinius (r. 308–324 CE), and became ruler of the whole empire. Constantinople had a very good strategic position. It was easily defended and close to the frontiers of the empire, so armies could respond faster. Also, some consider it was founded as a new city for a new religion. We should not forget that it became the cultural and economic center of the eastern part of the empire. Yet, there were still more problems that influenced the fall of Rome. Economically the empire was struggling with financial problems, and they were followed by political and military difficulties. It was a particularly long period of financial crisis that introduced the slow collapse of the economy in the west. This economic depression was in large part caused by the failure of the Romans' system of conquest and enslavement. This was reflected in their military forces, so to save the western part of the empire, the authorities would hire mercenaries, much cheaper and less reliable, mainly Germanic soldiers. In this fight between fellow tribesmen, failure and the sack of Rome was inevitable.

Also, there is evidence of a continuous decline in population across the entire empire from the second century on. The reasons for this drastic reduction in human resources are not quite clear, although some undoubtedly were due to plagues, as well as constant warfare on the frontiers. Among others mentioned by some historians are lead poisoning, a theory proposed by the historian Tenney Frank long ago, and disinterest in raising children in the traditional Roman lifestyle. The influx of foreigners into the Roman army also led to more loyalty to their general than the emperor, a development that had managed to destroy the Roman Republic.

Finally, the late Roman period was plagued by political failures. Incompetent emperors and inept policies contributed to the failure of traditional politics and the rise of political corruption. This corrupt political structure was aggravated by an oppressive system of taxation, which had been developed to support the huge armies needed to fight Rome's many enemies. Corruption and high taxes led to inflation and a growing indifference to the fate of a seemingly failed state. As a result, many Romans abandoned political engagement and life in the cities, which had been the foundation of ancient society. As power in Rome fell to local governors, the concept of a shared Roman civilization was itself threatened.

In 410 CE, Visigoths led by Alaric breached the walls of Rome, sacked the city, and left it destroyed. In waves and in turns, Germanic barbarian tribes attacked, looted, and burned Rome. In 476 CE, Romulus, last emperor of the West, was overthrown by the Germanic leader Odoacer, who became the first Barbarian ruler on the Roman

throne. Odoacer removed the child from the throne and sent him off to a monastery where he subsequently died. Although he usurped the throne, he did not encounter real opposition, politically or militarily. Barbarian leaders like him held powerful positions behind the throne for many years in Rome, and the Germans ended only simulated control of the Roman West. Odoacer immediately contacted Eastern Emperor Zeno (r. 474–491 CE) and informed him that he would not accept the title of emperor but would rule as the representative of the Eastern Empire. It was a convenient fiction that Odoacer hoped would make his rule more acceptable to the Roman population.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Slavery; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Zeno

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Second Crusade (1147–1150)

After completing their task in the First Crusade, many of the Crusaders returned home. Those who remained in the conquered territory established four western settlements, called Crusader States: Jerusalem, Edessa, Antioch, and Tripoli. The Crusaders persisted in the region until 1130, when Muslim forces initiated their holy war (jihad) against Christians to recapture the lands. Edessa, the northernmost state was lost in 1144. News of Edessa's loss shocked both Eastern and Western Christians and urged authorities in the West to call for another Crusade.

In 1145, the Pope Eugenius III issued a papal bull for the Second Crusade, a kind of formal call never seen before. At first there was no response at all. In proclaiming this bull, he addressed it mainly to the king and nobles of France. On the other hand, French royalty had a plan to organize a French armed pilgrimage, which was quite an innovative approach compared with the military tactics employed in the First Crusade, and the papacy was not included in it. When this idea was proposed to nobles, they showed no interest and the king had to postpone it until 1146. In the meantime, the figure of Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux intervened, as a person distinguished for his political skills. Being aware that possible conflict between the French and the pope could cause a serious problem, he began negotiations between the two sides that resulted in a new papal bull. This slightly changed bull was extremely effective, so it initiated a new Crusade in 1146.

Contrary to the First Crusade, the second was led by two of Europe's greatest rulers: King Louis VII of France (r. 1137–1180) and King Conrad III of Germany (r. 1138–1152). At first, there was an idea to exclude Germany from the plan, but German support was desperately needed. The Second Crusade began in Regensburg in March 1147, after one year of preparations, negotiations, and inspiring crusading sermons. Unlike the first one, this military campaign had three goals: kings of Germany and France would attempt to restore Edessa, and some Crusaders would go to Spain to fight Muslims while others would invade Baltic shores to fight Slavic tribes.

At that point, the situation in the East was quite different. For Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (r. 1143–1180), the Second Crusade was an unpleasant surprise. Another Crusade was incompatible with his foreign policy. First, he was an ally of Germany, Venice, and the pope against Normans, and second, he had established good relations with the Turkish sultan. Furthermore, the success of the Crusaders could possibly strengthen the Latin states in the East, especially the kingdom of Antioch.

The beginning was not promising. It was just a repeated scenario. The Crusaders passing through Byzantine lands created the usual disturbances, causing deterioration of relations between the Germans and the Byzantines. Apart from it, Emperor Manuel (r. 1143–1180) was deprived of his mobility and had to stay in the capital. Roger II of Sicily even ravaged Corfu and destroyed highly appreciated Byzantine centers of silk production.

Conrad left with his troops in May 1147, and in September he was in Constantinople, and already in October the Turks defeated his forces at Dorylaeum, site of an important victory during the First Crusade. The French reached this in November, establishing strong anti-Byzantine positions. Constantinople was in a dangerous position, and Manuel had to spread the rumors about a German victory in Asia Minor so that the French would leave the city and claim their share of the booty from the Germans.

This illustration from the *Chronique de France ou de Saint Denis*, a 14th-century text, shows King Louis VII of France and his knights on the Second Crusade. Led by Louis VII and Conrad III of Germany among others, the crusade was organized in response to the loss of the Crusader state of Edessa to the Seljuk Turks in 1144. Unlike the First Crusade, the second was seen as a failure, and it damaged relations between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire. (The British Library)

When they learned about the German defeat, Louis and Conrad reorganized their forces to head toward Jerusalem. Conrad became ill in Asia and had to return to Constantinople, where Manuel personally took care of him. Unfortunately, the French army suffered the same fate as the Germans in their first fight. When the armies received reinforcements, the decision was made at the assembly in Jerusalem to attack Damascus. Edessa was too far away for them, and it ceased to be the objective for the two kings and their forces. The king of Jerusalem, Baldwin III, hoped that conquest of Damascus would bring him prestige and liberate him from his mother's regency.

In preparations to attack Damascus, the Syrian stronghold, they gathered an army of around 50,000 men (the largest Crusader force yet). Unfortunately, the plan that the Crusaders made was not adequately conceived or executed. The Crusaders' forces tried to seize the city, and in this operation, they found themselves in an even more difficult position. On a hot plain without water, they were not able to prolong their stay and had to withdraw. On September 8, 1148, Conrad III left the Holy Land. Louis VII extended his stay and remained in the region until the Easter of 1149 but achieved nothing. On his way to Germany, Conrad III made a treaty with Manual I Comnenus. The Second Crusade ended with the Crusaders suffering a humiliating defeat and Nur al-Din, the regional leader, continued expanding his empire by the addition of Damascus in 1154.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Key Events*: First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; *Objects and Artifacts*: True Cross

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Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381 CE)

The Second Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 381 CE, confirmed and complemented the decisions of the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, and finally formulated the symbol of the Christian religion.

The death of Emperor Valens accelerated the downfall of Arianism. In the decades before the Second Ecumenical Council, a divided empire was led by brothers Valens (r. 364–378 CE) and Valentinian I (r. 364–375 CE), members of the two rival religious

communities: Valens in the East, was Arian, and Valentinian I on the West, was a follower of Nicene Christianity. Valens's successor, Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE), supported the Nicene Creed, protected the Orthodox faith, and persecuted heretical Christian groups.

The victory of the orthodox faith was outlined at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople. The gathering of church authorities approved and affirmed decisions taken at the Nicene Council in 325 CE, thereby providing a theological blueprint for the true faith.

In May 381 CE, the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople convened. During its sessions it condemned the heresies of Arianism, Macedonism, and Apollorianism, and modified and appended the Nicene Creed. The first and most important is that the council declared the Trinitarian doctrine and proclaimed equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. Gregory the Theologist (or Gregory Nanzianen), a priest from Asia Minor, played a distinguished role on the council. He was known as an outstanding spokesman of the Nicene party and considered one of the greatest defenders of Orthodoxy against Arianism. Theodosius was prepared to acknowledge him as bishop of Constantinople, but due to technical complications, Gregory decided to withdraw.

The form established at the council is used today in the Eastern Orthodox Church. This decree was a basis for three heresies to be discussed and disapproved: Arianism, Macedonism, and Apollinarianism.

The first one, Arianism, which was the most popular in the empire, stressed the uniqueness of God, unlike the officially accepted Trinity. Macedonism was a fourth-century Christian heresy that denied the full personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit. In Orthodox Christian theology, God is one but three in Person—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who are distinct and equal. But according to this heresy, the Holy Spirit was created by the Son and was thus subordinate to the Father and the Son. Followers of the heresy were called Macedonians, but were also known as Pneumatomachians, or in other words the "spirit fighters." Apollinarianism, on the other hand, denied the existence in Christ of a human, rational soul.

In addition, the council adopted a canon affirming that the church in Constantinople, the new imperial capital called "New Rome," would naturally assume leading status, though the church in Old Rome would preserve its traditional position as "first among equals." Pope Damascus rejected this canon, and disagreement arising over this issue led to further separation of the two churches, as well as the two parts of the empire.

The council was presided over by the bishop of Antioch, Meletius I, who suddenly died in May. In the process to be proclaimed as bishop of Constantinople, Gregory I took over the presidency until June, when he resigned. Finally, the last person to lead the council was Nestorius, in the meantime elected as bishop of Constantinople. After the Second Council, the sees of honorary primacy—Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria—used their authority to establish control over nearby metropolitan churches, and thus in the second phase this system included five patriarchates.

During Theodosius's rule, the Christianization of the empire was finally completed and Orthodox Christianity (Nicene) became the only permitted official faith. All other religions were condemned by both secular and ecclesiastical law.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; Eastern Orthodox Church; Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Gregory of Nazianzus; *Groups and Organizations*: Arians

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Sicilian Vespers (1282)

The Byzantine Empire lost Sicily to the Arabs in the ninth century CE. From there, the Normans invaded the island, and during this period Sicily reached the status of a kingdom. In 1194, Henry of Hohenstaufen, a son of Frederick Barbarossa and the Holy Roman emperor, held the kingship. The Sicilians balked at the thought of becoming just another part of the Holy Roman Empire. During his reign, a rivalry occurred between the Hohenstaufen Dynasty and the papacy. In 1254, the crown of Sicily passed to two-year-old Conradin, and Pope Innocent IV saw this as an opportunity to take Sicily for himself.

Meanwhile, a separate faction began to form around Manfred, an illegitimate son of Frederick II and also Conradin's uncle. The claimants then reached an agreement, whereby the pope would rule Sicily until Conradin reached the age of majority. However, both parties started looking for ways to break the deal almost as soon as it was signed. When Alexander IV succeeded Innocent IV as pope, he began searching for a candidate for the throne who would be more loyal to Rome. Both he and Louis of Bavaria, Conradin's guardian, supported Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III of England, for the title. Manfred, meanwhile, sought support from the German nobles, and when a rumor spread that Conradin had died in 1258, Manfred had himself crowned king of Sicily.

At this point, the fate of Sicily became intertwined with events in the east. The Latin Empire, established at Constantinople in 1204, was on the decline and threatened by

Epirus and Nicaea. Through marriage, Manfred allied himself with Michael of Epirus. In Nicaea, Michael Palaeologus first received the title of regent, and then despot. A victory over Epirus at Pelagonia in 1259 all but guaranteed that the Latin Empire would fall to Nicaea. In 1261, Michael formed an alliance with Genoa, and together they planned an attack on Constantinople. Baldwin II, the Latin emperor, abandoned the city in August of that year. The despot of Nicaea entered Constantinople in triumph and was crowned Emperor Michael VIII (r. 1259–1282). Having reestablished the Byzantine Empire, Michael VIII set out to reconquer more territory, notably Greece.

Hoping to keep the papacy at bay, Manfred worked to position himself as the savior of Latin Christendom. Together, he and Baldwin II attempted to raise support for a Crusade against Constantinople. However, Alexander IV died in 1261 and Urban IV, who succeeded him as pope, had no interest in keeping the peace with Manfred. His preferred candidate for the throne of Sicily was Charles of Anjou, brother of King Louis IX of France. Clement IV, who became pope in 1264, was of the same mind. Charles was first crowned king of Italy in 1265, and Manfred began losing his allies, while an Angevin force occupied Italy. On February 26, 1266, Manfred lost his life near Benevento. When the Angevins moved into Sicily, there was no resistance. In Constantinople, Michael VIII was weary of the new king, knowing that this would result in a closer relationship between Sicily and the papacy.

Conradin, who was still alive and backed by those who had been loyal to Manfred, suddenly emerged as a serious threat to Charles of Anjou. A revolt in Sicily, supported by Conradin and the city of Tunis, broke out in 1267. At the time, Charles was busy establishing his control over Tuscany. He met Conradin in battle at Tagliacozzo on August 23, 1268. Conradin was defeated, arrested, and beheaded in October 1268. Charles dealt with the Sicilian rebels harshly, and he restructured the kingdom according to the French feudal system. Cities lost their independence, and many had their lands confiscated.

Clement IV died in 1268, and Charles took advantage of a long vacancy to satisfy his ambitions for a Mediterranean empire. In 1270, he began planning for an attack on Constantinople. However, Michael VIII reached out to King Louis IX of France and encouraged him to launch a Crusade against the Muslims. Louis IX convinced his brother Charles to join him. Thinking of the Sicilian revolt, Charles suggested Tunis as a target, and Louis agreed to join him. Louis sailed there with his forces in July 1270. Charles came the following month, only to hear that Louis had died.

In 1272, Pope Gregory X opposed any aggression toward Constantinople. Instead, he and Michael VIII continued working on the reunification of the Roman and Constantinopolitan churches, a process started under Clement IV. They achieved peace at Lyon in 1274, and Michael VIII agreed that the eastern churches would accept Roman Catholicism. However, the Byzantine emperor faced serious opposition to ending the schism and submitting to Rome.

Charles acquiesced, signing a peace treaty with the Byzantine Empire that would last for two years, but shifted his focus to other territories in the East, declaring himself king of Albania and allying with the kings of Serbia and Bulgaria against Michael VIII. He was soon fighting battles against Byzantine forces in Greece and the Balkans.

Charles had to wait until 1281 for a pope who would support a direct attack on the Byzantine capital. Martin IV, unlike his predecessors, had no interest in ending the schism with the East. Together with the pope, the Venetians, and Baldwin II's son, Philip, Charles began organizing a force, hoping to depart for Constantinople in 1282.

Michael VIII, knowing that he would be unable to offer a strong defense, switched to manipulation. In 1279, he had met with John of Procida, a representative of the kingdom of Aragon, then ruled by King Peter III. Together, they planned to instigate a revolt in Sicily. John may also have courted the support of Pope Nicholas III (r. 1277–1280). Much of this account was suspect, but it was true that many enemies of Charles who had left Sicily had settled in Aragon. Their presence influenced Peter III, who was also married to the daughter of the late King Manfred of Sicily. The people of Sicily, long disapproving of Charles, were willing to revolt.

The first violence erupted just before vespers, or the evening prayer, on Easter, March 29, 1282. A mob massacred the French residing in Palermo. The revolt quickly spread to other cities, and Charles realized the seriousness of the event only when the city of Messina joined. Pope Martin IV supported Charles and involved the papacy by excommunicating the Sicilian rebels, but to no effect. As Messina was the city where Charles had been gathering his army for an attack on Constantinople, the revolt effectively ended his plans for war. Peter III invaded the island in August 1282 after Charles besieged Messina.

Michael VIII's conspiracy saved the Byzantine Empire from attack, although he died in 1282 before the revolt concluded. Both Charles and Peter III died in 1285, and the Anjous and the kingdom of Aragon eventually divided Sicily between them. As a result of its involvement, papal authority declined in Italy, a consequence that helped lead to the rise of the Avignon Papacy in the 14th century.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Organization and Administration*: Feudalism; *Groups and Organizations*: Franks; Slavs; *Key Places*: Bulgaria

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Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (680–681 CE)

The Sixth Ecumenical Council took place in Constantinople in 680–681 CE with a plan to condemn the heresy of the Monothelites. Monothelitism was a seventh-century Christian heresy that maintained that Christ had one will. The council

condemned Monothelitism and asserted two wills and two operations in the person of Christ.

The controversy regarding wills and operations in Christ originated in the attempts made by Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) to enable a return to the church and empire the excommunicated and persecuted Monophysites of Egypt and Syria. Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, was fully aware how serious the situation was, so he was constantly searching for a solution to the problem. His attempts were supported by teaching that had spread in Egypt around 600 CE. It appeared that the theory about two natures but one operation in Christ could serve as a bridge between the Monophysites and the Chalcedon dogma. Emperor Heraclius accepted this idea, and during his campaigns in the East he negotiated with local clergy about reconciliation. But, soon opposition started emerging on both sides. The orthodox side headed by the monk Sophronius criticized the teaching as close to Monophysitism. To avoid further confrontation, Sergius amended his teaching slightly and instead of operations, he introduced a concept of one will in Christ. In 638 CE, Heraclius issued the "Statement of Faith," which formulated the position. Unfortunately, this led to such intense controversy that Heraclius's successor, Constans II (r. 641–668 CE), had to issue an edict in 648 CE forbidding all discussion of the question. This secured silence for some period, despite the protest of the Western church.

The developments in the East forced Byzantine leaders to change their policy regarding church affairs. The lost eastern provinces proved that the attempt to reconcile Monothelitism with Monophysitism and Chalcedonian Christianity was senseless. More important, it just made the situation worse and provoked turbulence in the West. Taking all this into account, upon agreement with Rome, the Emperor Constantine IV convoked a council that had only one task: to make a clean break with the Monothelites.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council met at the beginning of November 680 CE, for its first session, and ended its meetings, which are said to have been 18 in number, in September of the next year. Emperor Constantine IV Pogonatus (r. 668–685 CE) summoned the council with no intention that it should be ecumenical. It appears that he had invited all the metropolitans and bishops under the jurisdiction of Constantinople and had also informed the archbishop of Antioch that he might do the same. Long before the council convened, he had written to Pope Agatho on the same subject.

When the synod assembled, however, it assumed at its first session the title "ecumenical," since all five patriarchs were represented. Alexandria and Jerusalem sent their deputies although they were at the time in the hands of the infidel. He assembly lasted from November 7, 680, until September 16, 681 CE, and had an unusual number of sessions. The council proclaimed the theory about two operations and two wills human and divine was a doctrine of Orthodox Christian faith.

As a result, Monothelitism was condemned as a heresy and its leaders were anathematized, as were those who previously took part in spreading it: among others Pope Honorius I (r. 625–638 CE) of Rome and Patriarchs of Constantinople Sergius I (r. 610–638 CE), Pyrrhus (r. 638–641 and 654 CE), Paul II (r. 641–653 CE), and Peter (r. 654–666 CE), as well as the patriarch of Alexandria, Cyrus (r. 630–643 CE).

The emperor attended and chaired almost all meetings and led theological discussions. He was acclaimed as a defender and interpreter of the new faith. The decisions of the council were reaffirmed at the so-called Quinsext Council convoked by Emperor Justinian II (r. 685–695 CE) in Constantinople from September 1, 691, to August 31, 692 CE.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; Eastern Orthodox Church; Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Heraclius

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Theodosian Code (438 CE)

The *Codex Theodosianus*, or Theodosian Code, was a compilation of Roman laws dating to as early as 311. The *Codex Theodosianus* was preceded by two other compilations, the *Codex Gregorianus* (291 CE) and the *Codex Hermogenianus* (295 CE), both of which were made during the reign of Diocletian. However, these were both private documents. The *Codex Theodosianus* was the first public law code since the Twelve Tables of the Republic. It was one part of Theodosius II's (r. 408–450 CE) work to reform the Roman legal system, the second being the establishment of a law school in Constantinople.

In 429 CE, Theodosius II formed a committee headed by Antiochus Chuzon that worked on gathering all Roman laws made since the reign of Constantine the Great. The process, including restructuring the laws into something readable and checking for accuracy, took almost a decade. The final version of the codex, most of which has survived to the present day, contained over 2,500 entries and was 16 volumes long. The laws were first organized by subject, and then listed chronologically.

The codex is not without its flaws. First, there is a chance that it is incomplete. Justinian's own compilation, the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, contains laws that Theodosius II's committee appears to have missed. Some laws are repeated unnecessarily, and no connections are made to prior rulings on the same subjects. The entries also omit the details of the cases, noting only the judgments as they applied to the whole empire.

Nevertheless, the document is a useful primary source for the later Roman Empire. The codex illustrates the Roman bureaucracy, in that many laws were addressed to praetorian prefects, who then transmitted the information to the provinces. Some

EDUCATION

Byzantine society was well educated by the standards of its time, with high levels of literacy compared with the rest of the world. Significantly, it possessed a secular education system that was a continuation of the academies of classical antiquity. Primary education was widely available, and uniquely it was available for both sexes. The original school, the University of Constantinople, was founded in 425 CE by Emperor Theodosius II with 31 chairs—15 Latin and 16 Greek—for philosophy, law, medicine, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, rhetoric, and other subjects. In 438 CE, during the reign of Theodosius II, the Theodosian Code (*Codex Theodosianus*), a collection of imperial enactments issued since the reign of Constantine the Great, was also published.

The main content of higher education for most students was rhetoric, philosophy, and law. The aim of the school was the production of competent and learned personnel to occupy bureaucratic positions in state and church. In this sense, the university was the secular equivalent of the theological schools. The university maintained an active philosophical tradition based on Platonism and Aristotelianism. Although the Latin conquest of 1204 began a long period of decline, the university survived as a nonsecular institution under church management until the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

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laws, such as ones restricting movement or tying sons to the professions of their fathers, make the Roman Empire appear oppressive and totalitarian. This assessment, however, is debated. The *Codex Theodosianus* also included Christian religious laws, particularly those pertaining to heresy and Arianism. Theodosius I established Nicene Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. He also identified it as the Christianity of Bishop Peter of Alexandria and Pope Damascus.

The codex was officially enforced beginning January 1, 439 CE, and it was read to the Senate in December of that year. Both Theodosius II and his coemperor, Valentinian III (r. 425–455 CE), approved the codex. It would later serve as a source for the Lex Romana Visigothorum (the law code for the Visigothic Kingdom in Spain) and the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* under the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) in the sixth century.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Law; *Individuals*: Theodosius II; *Key Events: Corpus Iuris Civilis*; Thessalonica, Edict of

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Thessalonica, Edict of (380 CE)

The Edict of Thessalonica was written on February 27, 380 CE, and signed by the three reigning Roman emperors: Gratian (r. 367–383 CE) and Valentinian II (r. 371–392 CE) in the West and Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE) in the East. The proclamation made Orthodox Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire.

Although at the time it was common practice to administer baptism on one's deathbed, Theodosius, unlike other Christian emperors, received baptism early in his reign. The emperor fell ill at Thessalonica and Ascholius, the city's bishop, baptized him, but then he recovered. This dramatic experience left him with a greater interest in religious matters, especially as they pertained to the state. Ascholius, who was of the Orthodox faith and under the authority of Pope Damasus I (366–384 CE), likely influenced the emperor's decision to choose Orthodox Christianity over the other doctrines in existence at the time. Of the three emperors, Theodosius was more aggressive when dealing with divisions in Christianity.

The edict also called the *cunctos populos*, or "all the people," was written to address the popular Christian heresies of the fourth century CE, notably Arianism. Arians rejected the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and, instead, believed that Jesus (the Son) had not eternally existed as God (the Father) had. Arianism gets its name from Arius, a third-century CE Alexandrian, and the Council of Nicaea declared it heresy in 325 CE. Arianism was particularly popular among the Germanic tribes of northern Europe. In contrast, Orthodox Christianity adhered to the Trinitarian doctrine outlined in the Nicene Creed, which the council first drafted in 325 CE. Trinitarianism held that all members of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—were equal.

The Edict of Thessalonica recognized both the churches in Rome and Alexandria as Orthodox and granted religious authority to the former. This established the primacy of Roman Catholicism and the pope, while also promoting European Christianity over that of the Byzantine Empire. Houses of worship that followed anything other than Catholicism were no longer able to call themselves churches. The edict ended with a statement that, in the future, the state had the right to address heresy violently if necessary.

Another edict passed the next year that made it illegal for heretics to gather in cities. The Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople went one step further in 381 CE when it updated the Nicene Creed, accepted by all the assembled bishops. This decision delivered the final official blow to Arianism and other nontrinitarian heresies, but conflict persisted, especially in the East. In 383 CE, Theodosius invited representatives from several heretic sects, including the Arians, to present declarations of

faith. All but one statement was burned, and the state cracked down further by taking possession of heretical houses of worship.

Valentinian II was sympathetic to the Arians, as his mother, Justina, was one of their followers, and his court in Milan included many members of Arianism. The emperor turned on them in 387 CE, when Maximus, *magister equitum* (supreme Roman cavalry commander) of Britain, who had killed Gratian and taken his place, invaded Italy. According to Valentinian's order, Arians could no longer assemble, and they were forbidden to celebrate any Christian sacraments.

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See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Arians; *Key Events*: Nicaea, Council of; Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople

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Thessalonica, Massacre of (390 CE)

The massacre of Thessalonica was a massive atrocity carried out by Gothic military groups under the command of Roman Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE) in 390 CE against the citizens of Thessalonica when they revolted against Germanic soldiers.

Thessalonica had been one of the largest, most prosperous and politically important cities of the Roman Empire. It was also an imperial city and it had become the residence by Theodosius's choice at the beginning of his reign in 379–380 CE. Like many other big cities of the Roman period, it was also home to a hippodrome where the inhabitants went to watch chariot races and animal hunts, as well as public executions. Like Rome and Constantinople, Thessalonica's population was divided in supporting different teams of charioteers, which they did in an almost fanatical way.

In 390 CE, the commander of Thessalonica's army troops was a man called Butheric, probably of Gothic origin. After the Battle of Adrianople in 378 CE, relations between the Roman Empire and Goths were rather tense and turbulent. Despite that, many Goths moved to imperial lands and even joined the military service. As expected, they were not always welcome, and hostility was often present and openly expressed.

The most widely accepted story of the account relates that Butheric imprisoned one of the most popular charioteers because of indecent behavior, or as some historians say, over an alleged rape of a slave. The people of Thessalonica gathered and demanded the charioteer to be released. When Butheric refused to do it, a riot ensued, and in the end, the commander was lynched. Emperor Theodosius decided to demonstrate his rage and indignation. In April 390 CE, when the citizens of Thessalonica had gathered in the circus of their town, the emperor's troops were let loose. It was a dreadful slaughter: several thousand men, women, and children were massacred in just three hours.

Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, withdrew in horror from the emperor's court and left Milan, the residence of Theodosius at that time. He denounced Theodosius's wickedness and banned him from receiving communion until he had repented. After an eight-month-long penance, the emperor sought absolution and was readmitted to communion on Christmas Day 390 CE.

Many scholars express their concerns regarding this version of the story. First and foremost, they emphasize that the sources and the written documents describing the incident are rather scant and unreliable. The question of Butheric's position and origin remain open. It is assumed the he was the commanding general of the field army in Illyricum, but we have no knowledge of his responsibilities or the size or composition of the troops he commanded. His name suggests Germanic or Gothic origins but is by no means the final proof of his roots. Moreover, the time when the incident occurred is blurred, because what the sources mention are the months of April and Christmas, but the year could be 389 or 390 CE. In addition, the actual cause of the rebellion is unknown, and some historians simply omit the story of the imprisoned charioteer.

Probably, the biggest enigma and the main question is why Theodosius reacted like this and how he could have deliberately put to death so many innocent Roman citizens, Christians predominantly, inhabitants of a very old Greek city? Some tend to conclude that Theodosius was enraged beyond the limits and therefore unable to logically think through his actions. Or he simply considered the inhabitants of Thessalonica to have deserved an exceptionally cruel collective punishment. Others consider that Theodosius had been inclined to grace but, at a secret meeting of the imperial consistory, he was persuaded by his advisers to authorize this revengeful act. This way of thinking opens yet another topic with a question many scholars frequently ask: Is it possible to replace the decision-making process with an outbreak of bad temper in an empire like the Roman?

Modern scholars present a scenario that may reconcile the conflicting opinions. They imagine a situation in which the soldiers were surrounded by angry citizens, and therefore forced to react in the only way they were trained to act. They cleared the hippodrome in a short period of time, and the casualties were the consequence of the operation. A military strategy that resulted in several thousand human victims ended up being a huge mistake that severely damaged Theodosius's reputation.

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See also: *Key Events*: Adrianople, Battle of; *Key Places*: Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus

The fifth century in Byzantine history was marked by severe theological disputes and discussions, and its consequences on the political situation in the empire were complex. The Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (modern Turkey, Asia Minor) convoked by Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE) in 431 CE was an inseparable part of turbulent times in the church. There were two councils in Ephesus, and both represented absolute victory of the principle of one nature in Christ, supported by two successive bishops of Alexandria, Cyril and Dioscorus, over the view of two natures, promoted by Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople for a short period, before his deposition. The emperor decided to summon the Council in Ephesus in 431 CE to solve dogmatic differences.

The main purpose of this reunion of 200 bishops was to investigate teachings of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople. The question in dispute was a relation between concepts of divine and human in Christ. According to the Antiochian theological school, there were two separated natures, one next to another: the human and the divine. Opposed to this rational understanding stood Alexandrian mystical teachings that estimated that the divine nature was united with the human. In 428 CE, Nestorius from Antioch took the position of the chief bishop of Constantinople and started spreading his teachings. Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, was his strong opponent, a powerful theologian and skilled politician. He was supported by monks from Egypt and, more important, by Rome itself.

Furthermore, Nestorius refused to declare Mary Theotokos (Mother of God) since it caused confusion between the human and the divine sides in Christ. He suggested she should be called only Mary Anthropotokos (Human Bearer) or Mary Christotokos (Christ Bearer) as a Mother of Christ's human side, not the divine one. Cyril, supported by the synod, expressed his opinion in a text, underlying that Mary gave birth not to any person but to a unique person who was both divine and human.

Despite the support of the imperial court, Nestorius was anathematized as a heretic. This was a great victory for Bishop Cyril, who defeated the bishop of the capital.

Even further, it was a crushing blow to the imperial court. Thus, the bishop of Alexandria became predominant in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Additionally, the council decided that any alteration in the text of the Nicene Creed in the future was forbidden and punishments were defrocking for clergy and excommunication for laity.

Nevertheless, this was not the end of the dispute. Alexandria maintained its powerful position during the time when Dioscorus, Cyril's successor, occupied the post of bishop. The imperial court accepted the defeat and did not oppose the Alexandrian influence. Archimandrite Eutyches, representative of the Alexandrian faction in Constantinople, was almighty in the imperial court. Provoked by this, Constantinople and Rome initiated collaboration against Alexandria. From the theological and political point of view, Dioscorus and Eutyches were Cyril's followers, but starting from Cyril's teachings, Eutyches made one step forward, maintaining that after the incarnation, two natures of Christ were transformed into one: divine. This was how after the disputes over Nestorian heresy that Monophysitism appeared, teaching about one nature in Christ, as its opposition.

The church synod in Constantinople immediately condemned Eutyches as a heretic, and shortly afterward Pope Leo I declared against Monophysite teachings. He pointed out in his *Tome* that in the figure of Christ, even after the incarnation, we should still distinguish his divine and human natures. This is when Rome and Constantinople stood together in the fight against Alexandria.

It is interesting to point out that Theodosius II did not take part in the council, which itself shows that the state refrained from getting involved in ecclesiastical affairs. The emperor appointed Flavius Candidianus, his deputy, to observe the matter, but he was not able to interfere in the proceedings of the synod.

Despite all, the Alexandrian side prevailed once again at the new council in 449 CE, known as the "Robber Council" of Ephesus, or Ephesus II. Presided over by Dioscorus, it proclaimed Monophysitism as a true faith.

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See also: *Individuals*: Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople; Theodosius II; *Key Places*: Antioch

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Three Chapters Controversy (sixth century)

The name of the controversy refers to the writings of three fifth-century bishops: Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibas of Edessa, and Theodoretos of Kyrros. These men were

accused of Nestorianism, which teaches that Christ's divine and human natures remained distinct. Theodore of Mopsuestia had been Nestorius's mentor. Nestorianism was condemned as heresy at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE. However, Ibas and Theodoretos recanted and were absolved (Theodore had died before the council met). To those who vehemently opposed Nestorianism, particularly Monophysites who believed that Christ had only one nature, this was unacceptable. This dispute ultimately created two factions: the Chalcedonians and the anti-Chalcedonians. Although both sides opposed Nestorianism, the issue still lay with whether Chalcedon had been too lenient. Meanwhile, the Nestorians did not disappear, but increased in number. In response, the Monophysites did the same.

The Byzantine emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) wanted to bring unity to Eastern Christendom, and he saw this controversy as an opportunity to intervene. Justinian was a staunch Chalcedonian, and in the past, he had often used force against any group of heretics not in communion with the church in Constantinople. The one thing virtually everyone could agree upon was that Nestorianism was a heresy. The emperor believed that a stronger condemnation could serve as common ground and eventually lead to reunification. In 543 CE, Justinian issued a decree that labeled the three bishops as Nestorians and, therefore, heretics. In effect, he was undoing the decision made at Chalcedon and followed it up by a confession of True Faith in 551 CE.

The patriarchs in the East, although reluctantly, and not without some pressure, accepted the edict. Zoilas of Alexandria, expressing doubts after signing on, was removed from his position and replaced with someone more amenable. Pope Vigilius traveled to Constantinople in 545 CE. Although he felt that Justinian did not have the right to involve himself in these matters, the emperor forced him to sign his support three years later. Before the emperor's decision, the churches of Rome and Constantinople had been close, and Justinian valued the pope's opinion as well as his support. The response to the edict called this relationship into question.

The opposition was most vigorous in the West, where the debate over Christ's nature was known but not as relevant. The Western church saw this as an attack on the Council of Chalcedon's authority, and opponents argued that the Byzantine emperor lacked the power to involve himself in religious disputes. At the time, many churches across the Mediterranean answered to Rome. For them, Virgilius's support of Justinian's decision was unforgivable. Clergy in the Balkans formally denounced the edict in 550 CE. The churches in northern Italy stayed in a schism with Rome until 607 CE. Rome then became more dependent on Byzantine support against its neighbors, and Justinian gave the city military protection so long as the pope upheld the edict. Others, such as the church in Orleans, chose to ignore it altogether.

In 553 CE, Justinian ordered another church council to convene at Constantinople. By then, Vigilius had renounced his support and refused to attend, even though Justinian held him in the city against his will. Once again, he was forced to show support even in his absence. Others in the West also boycotted the council, although some chose to attend to fight the acceptance of the edict. These included the bishops from North Africa, who arrived in Constantinople but were eventually forbidden to participate in the council once their position was known.

Meanwhile, Justinian's decision did not convince the Monophysites, who showed no interest in unity. Justinian also alienated the Christian community in Persia, which was firmly Nestorian in belief. In 554 CE, a council at Seleucia voted to uphold their faith in the two natures of Christ.

Justinian's successor, Justin II (r. 565–574 CE), continued to try to bring unity to Christendom, courting Chalcedonians in the West and anti-Chalcedonians in the East. However, the order was ultimately ineffective. Division over the nature of Christ continued, although some churches opposed to Justinian's edict changed their position later in the seventh century CE. Churches in Visigothic Spain never accepted it and, a century later, continued to view Justinian negatively. In the long term, the controversy only encouraged Western Christendom to stay out of Eastern disputes, perpetuating the separation and eventually leading to the development of Latin religious traditions, at the expense of the Greek. It also gave the papacy a reason to be wary of future Byzantine emperors. Although future popes would occasionally submit to imperial edicts, it was clear that the church, as a single entity, would never accept the control of a secular leader.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Caesaropapism; Ecumenical Church Councils; *Organization and Administration*: Clergy; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople; *Henoticon*; Justinian I, Reconquest of the West

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Yarmouk, Battle of (636 CE)

The Battle of Yarmouk represents one of the best examples of epic twists in world military history. It occurred when Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE), who once had saved the Byzantine Empire from the Sassanid Empire, became responsible for handling out territories to an emerging Arab caliph. The Byzantine imperial forces were defeated in 636 CE near Yarmouk in Syria, when Arabs broke down their defense system and thus completed the fight for this land. It is identified as one of the most

important battles both in Byzantine and world history as a starting point of Muslim conquests outside Arabia and that ultimately led to the loss of Syria and Palestine.

Arabs started attacking the Byzantine Empire in 634 CE during the reign of the great conqueror Khalif Omar and advanced through territories that had been reconquered from Persians. They were able to win two battles and to weaken the Byzantine authorities in the Mediterranean coastline, also known as the Levant. It all culminated with the fall of Damascus in the second half of 635 CE. For unclear reasons, the emperor Heraclius did not respond to the attacks, but the failure at Damascus made him aware of how critical the situation was.

Therefore, Byzantine Emperor Heraclius and his advisers, especially his brother, Theodore, prepared strategic operations and organized a massive army. The large army was assembled, and it contained contingents of Byzantines, Franks, Georgians, Slavs, Armenians, and Christian Arabs. These forces were divided into five armies, and their leader was Theodore Trithourios the Sakellarios. Vahan, the Armenian noble and the former garrison commander of Emessa, functioned as an overall field commander. When the Byzantine army started to move southward, Muslim chief commander Khalid ibn al-Walid abandoned Damascus and conquered lands in Syria, and then retreated down the Jordan to the Yarmuk plain. The site where the battle occurred is an upland region currently on the frontier between Jordan, Syria, and Israel.

There are historians who underline financial troubles in the Byzantine Empire and explain it with Heraclius's decision to appoint a treasurer—*sakellarios*—to command troops in Asia. The raising and maintenance of the army was dependent on monetary payments, and Heraclius was fully committed to make regular and proper payments to soldiers for their services. In such a situation, the role of the *sakellarios* was to secure fiscal control and to enable these payments, although a treasurer was not the best choice to lead a military campaign in times of great military threats.

The Byzantines had logistic problems and they were not welcomed by the local population, which caused their delay. The first confrontation took place in May, and some time passed until the battle in August. This pause gave the Arabs an opportunity to gather reinforcements and to carefully observe their adversary's position. The initial offensive of the Byzantines turned into a defeat when the Arabs counterattacked, cut off the Byzantines' connection with reinforcements, and finally massacred the imperial army. There are many reasons for this failure, although some historians recognize the principal factors for the Arab success as the absence of Emperor Heraclius from the battlefield, since he decided to stay in Antioch; rejection of Armenian contingents to support the Byzantines; and the unquestionably great cavalry skill of the Arabs' horse archers.

The battle lasted six days. Throughout the battle, Khalid used wisely and effectively his well-equipped and skilled elite cavalry units. They were moving quickly from one point to another, always changing the course of events wherever it appeared necessary. On the other side, the Byzantines and their commanders failed to adequately oppose the Turkish mounted forces and to properly use the numerical superiority of their own army advantageously. The cavalry itself was never an important part of the

fight for the Byzantines, so it remained static for the rest of the battle. They were not able to push their attacks, and when on the fourth day they managed to gain a partial success, they were not able to take advantage of it. Some historians believe that internal conflicts and personal rivalry among imperial army commanders were largely responsible for this indecisiveness, and therefore a horrible defeat was the result.

Khalid began a resolute general attack on the sixth day of the battle, after he had completed a thorough planning of his actions. The Byzantines were defeated because of the rapid maneuvers of the Arabian cavalry and after brutal and intense fighting. The Byzantine army ended up totally chaotic, confused, and disintegrated. An inevitable retreat had to start, but the result was even more catastrophic, since the Arab commander blocked the exits to the plain.

The defeat at Yarmouk had severe consequences for future warfare. The Syrian capital of Antioch and most Syrian cities surrendered without any attempt to fight. Slightly stronger resistance was seen in Palestine. Jerusalem resisted for a longer period, but an intensive siege forced the city to open its gates to Omar in 638 CE. The defeat in one of the most important battles in world history represented the end of a millennium-long Greco-Roman era in the Levant.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Taxes; *Individuals*: Heraclius; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; Persians

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Military

OVERVIEW ESSAY

The entries contained in this section offer a thorough thumbnail sketch of the military history of the Byzantine Empire. In their entirety they highlight two of the more prominent characteristics of the Byzantine military and its role in larger Byzantine life. First, the military had a substantial role in the politics of the day. The army could be as much a threat to the emperor as it was a tool for policy and power. Second, all militaries change over time with technology and experience. Constantinople's location adds a unique variable to this. Their development was different from that of their brethren in Rome and other western neighbors in Greece.

Evolution of the Imperial Guard

The palace intrigue and power dynamic with the military occurred largely in the latter half of Byzantine history. A manifestation of that is the seemingly ever-changing responsibility of the imperial guard. The *Scholae Palatinae* replaced the Praetorian Guard, one of the most well-known vestiges of Roman power. This unit was later replaced by the Excubitors. The eighth century CE saw the emergence of foreign fighters as protectors of the emperor in the *Hetairoi*. The next, and final, version of imperial bodyguards were another group of foreign fighters: the Varangian Guard. In each case, the protection of the emperor was changed in fear of their power and proximity. There were instances where members of these units that were closest to the emperor participated in assassinations or allowed them to happen. Every few centuries, an emperor would change things around to retain power or prevent being overthrown. This was an attempt to prevent too much power from settling around the emperor and not with him.

This use of foreign fighters was common in antiquity, especially in the larger empires. Foreigners and native mercenaries, like the *Bucellari*, were common. This use of foreign fighters and the location of the Byzantine Empire between the Eastern and Western worlds present historians with a different military evolution than that of other Western armies. The Byzantine military changed as time progressed like any other organization, but the rate and fashion changed with a different level of intensity because of almost constant war and internal discord. The empire expanded and contracted various times and in various directions. This led to a variety of different nations falling under the control of Constantinople. Military traditions accompanied

these peoples. This is far from unusual in the military histories of the world. Over time and iteration this affects military traditions. Roman foot soldiers encountering mounted troops begets Roman mounted troops, who face advanced weapons and, eventually, gunpowder weapons. This simple sentence summarizes military tactics for 800 years and presents numerous tangents. Nova Roma endured the wars and enjoyed the benefit of geography in this respect. It was the crossroads of the East and the West. This included warfare, strategy, and tactics.

Advances in Military Organization, Strategy, and Tactics

The divergence from the military evolution of the Western world is noted in the numerous military treatises of the empire. The *Strategicon* and *Tactica* of Leo VI are not only historically notable because they are some of the oldest texts of their time and type. These works also present the earliest strategy for cavalry warfare. This was something the hoplites of Greece were not inclined to study and the Romans embraced only after the barbarization of their legions. The only Western force to embrace cavalry tactics sooner was led by Alexander the Great. These works also address projectile weapons in a systematic fashion very early. Only the military texts of ancient China do so. These references and attention to cavalry and projectile weapons are due in great part to Byzantium's unique place on the map and extensive experience fighting non-Western opponents long before some of the same forces made their way into Europe.

The Geography of Byzantium and Its Military

This empire whose border touched both Europe and Asia provided a formidable challenge for the most able-bodied monarch. Security was of paramount interest, if not for pride, then personal preservation. This led to an interesting cycle of changes in military structure. Emperors had to devise plans to provide for defending their realm and do so with a certain amount of fiscal responsibility. Throughout the history of an empire, the structure of the military force generally alternates between two security options. First, there is the idea of large standing, professional armies, quartered throughout the empire. This Roman concept proved untenable as the empire grew. Justinian signed a *foedus* with the Goths in the eighth century CE and created the first *foederati*. This seemingly solved two problems. It provided the army with recruits who were paid in land. Constantine I dispatched with this plan and created a trip-wire-like plan. The *comitatenses* were a large standing army. The *limitanei* were inferior, some say militia-type forces, quartered on forts along the border. The strategy in the event of attack was that the *limitanei* held off any attacks until the *comitatenses* could arrive, if they were needed.

Military Treatises

Probably the largest contribution to the field of theoretical military studied from the Byzantine Empire is the date and volume of military literature. Again, Nova Roma seems to have more in common with its Chinese counterparts to the east than the

Greek neighbors to the west. *De Re Militari* and the whole of the *Strategika* are instructional in nature. This differs a great deal from the narrative nature of Herodotus, who, for all the benefit of his work, tells the audience a story. The *Strategika* give the reader instruction. There are anecdotal aspects of the collection, but the bulk of the literature is informative and instructional. This accounts for the continued use of selected parts of the collection by modern-day militaries to their officers for study.

Most studies of military history only touch on the Byzantine Empire or make minor mention of it compared with the Greeks or Romans. This is amazing when one notes the contemporary innovations their military undertook and some of the enduring legacies that the Byzantines started for later Western societies and militaries. A lack of attention on the empire neglects the fact that it lasted another nine centuries beyond the more heralded Roman Empire, despite its far more perilous location.

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Athenatoi

The *Athenatoi* translates into "the Immortals" but should not be confused with the Persian forces that fought at Themopylae or the later military formations of the Sassanian Empire. This military group was a cavalry unit of Byzantium in the 10th and 11th centuries. While they were members of the cavalry, commonly referred to as the *cataphract*, group members were "special" in that they were considered elite and served as bodyguards. This group was led by a *domestikos*. Several military leaders established *Athenatoi* units. The last recorded engagement was in 1094.

The *Athenatoi*'s initial establishment in the Byzantine Empire came in 970 CE. Newly crowned Emperor John Tzimiskes (John I) (r. 969–976 CE) faced several different threats upon his ascension to the throne. A threat to the west came from Bulgar nobles who sought to regain territory. They established an alliance with the Rus'.

Together they demanded the Byzantine Empire withdraw from Europe completely. Soon, Sviatoslav I, the prince of Kiev, invaded and conquered key points in the empire. Next, he turned his sights on Constantinople. The commissioning of the *Athenatoi* was part of John I's preparation for the war. Byzantine forces were successful in defeating the Bulgar-Rus alliance.

For a time, the *Athenatoi* were absorbed back into the cataphracts. Michael VII (r. 1071–1078) reinstituted them in 1078. For the next 20 years, they reasserted themselves as the best cavalry available to the various Byzantine leaders. They fought under the direct command of Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) in putting down the rebellion of Nicephorus Byrennius. They continued to exist as military units, but they disappear from most accounts after the reign of Alexius I. Later, under Manuel I Comnenus (r. 1143–1180), they defended Constantinople from Crusaders, who were a substantial threat.

There are several descriptions of the *Athenatoi* despite their short history. Leo the Deacon, renowned Byzantine historian of the day, described the *Athenatoi* as sheathed in armor and called them "armed horsemen adorned in gold." Illustrated texts of the Eastern Orthodox Church show members in detail. They wore gilded chest armor, known as *klivanion*. It protected only the chest, and the wearer's arms were exposed. Below this, *Athenatoi* members wore a *kermasmata*. This was a skirt-like garment. There are variations on its material and several different accounts. Most allude to it being made of silk. The warriors carried a spear and a small ax, or *spathion*. They held a gilded ornamental shield and wore a decorated cloak. Under this, the *Athenatoi* member wore pants tucked into leggings and boots.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; *Military*: Cataphracts

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Bucellari

The *bucellari* were private soldiers employed by individuals, usually civilian or military leaders. The word translates to "biscuit eater," about *bucella*, military bread. The connection between fighting men and their name was that their leader provided them with bread. These fighters were exclusively cavalry units that followed their leader wherever he went. The practice of raising private armies started in the late fourth century and reached a peak in the sixth. By then, large numbers of paid retainers were used to augment armies their employers commanded. *Bucellari* officers occasionally received independent missions and commanded regular army troops.

The *bucellari* were recruited from both Romans and barbarians. They were divided into officers and privates. Their units were led by a commander, a *majordomo*. He had a paymaster who worked with him to maintain accounts and compensation, an *optio*. Many members opted to fight for a specific leader instead of the regular army or with a *foederati* unit because being a member of the *bucellari* was full-time, steady employment. There was also potential for upward mobility in the *bucellari*. Some *bucellari* officers were promoted into the ranks of the regular army. Justinian's (r. 527–565 CE) *Bucellari* produced Sittas, who served as *magister militum* (senior military officer or theater commander) of Armenia, and Chilbudius, *magister militum* of Thrace.

In parts of the empire, the affluent were encouraged to employ *bucellari*. Some regions offered tax breaks. In some places, the fighters were used for more domestic tasks. They would collect taxes and serve as crowd control and police forces. In this respect, the government benefited by essentially contracting work to them. It also provided the state with a pool of experienced fighters if needed.

Many emperors saw the *bucellari* as a threat. Occupiers of the throne were uneasy with losing their monopoly on violence. Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474 CE) tried making the groups illegal in the late fifth century but to no avail. However, Byzantine Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE) started to reform the army late in his reign. He sought to centralize the army and turn it into a more regular fighting force. He reduced the number of *bucellari*. Most were incorporated into the regular army. Once in the regular army, many settled in the Boukellarion theme located in Asia Minor.

There are strong comparisons between the *bucellari* and the *foederati*, as both were forms of mercenaries. There are strong similarities but also marked differences. Despite this, terms for fighters outside of the publicly funded army are used interchangeably. Additionally, there is dispute over the composition of the *bucellari* and *foederati*. Historians cite Vegetius's text *De Re Militari* and debate the meaning and use of the word "alien" in discussing paid troops.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Maurice; *Military*: *De Re Militari*; *Foederati*; Themes

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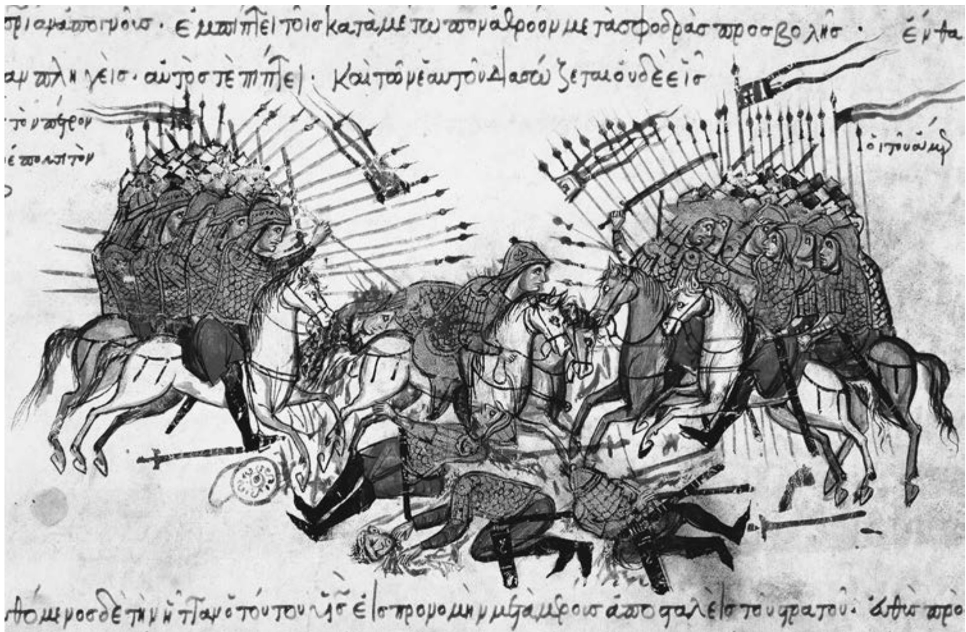
Cataphracts

Cataphracts were the heavy cavalry of the Roman and Byzantine armies. The cataphractii wore full suits of armor and carried a variety of weapons, mainly oversize shields, extralong lances, and longer-than-normal swords. It is interesting to note that there

were variations in the cataphractii depending on time and location. Regardless of time or place, the cataphractii were considered elite horsemen proved to be deadly in battle.

The evolution of the cataphractii is a point of historical debate. There are three different theories of their evolution in the Roman and Byzantine forces. First, some historians maintain that the heavy cavalry units evolved because of the topography of the eastern parts of the empire. The wide-open spaces contributed to the evolution of cavalry, and the result was the cataphracts. A second theory refers to Roman exposure to the Greeks. The root of the word "cataphracts" is the Greek word for "covered over." This refers to the chain or scale armor. A third and final theory of their origin rests on the Roman and Byzantine engagements against the mounted enemies of the east. This varies in nature as many of the tribes the Roman and Byzantine forces fought had units of cataphracts.

The evolution of the heavy cavalry dates to 9 BCE. It began with the Assyrian light cavalry of mounted archers, as well as the Parthians and the Achaemenid Persians. All had a tradition of mounted warfare. It was engagements and interactions with these different warriors that many attribute to the emergence of the cataphracts in Rome and Byzantium. The Romans saw the cataphracts in battle hundreds of years before they ventured to adopt them: Magnesia in 190 BCE and Tiganocerta in 69 BCE.



Cataphracts were heavily armored mounted archers that served mainly as assault troops against their opponents. Persians and Germanic Goths were both known to employ such shock formations against Roman infantry usually with deadly results. By the third century and throughout Byzantine history, military commanders met this threat by utilizing cataphract units of their own as this illustration from John Skylitzes's chronicle shows. (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain/Photo copyright AISA/Bridgeman Images)

Trajan started a corps of cataphracts in the Roman army in the first century CE. His successor, Hadrian, refined their training later.

The Roman cataphracts would be trained like the Armenians and Parthians. Roman leaders made changes to the cataphract template seen in their nonwestern opponents. They incorporated armor and heavy weapons. These heavier cavalry troops carried bows and pikes. They rode horses specifically bred for battle and lacked saddles or stirrups. The first Roman cataphract unit was the *Ala Gallorum et Pannoniorum*. This fighting force had advantages over its eastern counterparts. After the introduction of the stirrup in the sixth century CE, the cataphracts were harder to unseat from their mounts and could use their lances with the force of the horses behind it. It is important, however, to note that these forces took a much larger role in the Byzantine forces than those of Rome. This was based on the more suitable terrain in the Eastern Empire.

The innovative aspect of the cataphracts was its flexibility. The forces could be used as light infantry and use bows, which was very popular in the Byzantine Empire. They could be used as mounted shock troops and engage infantry opponents. They could also dismount and be used as infantry by shedding parts of their armor. An example of this exceptional aspect was the Battle of Casilinium. The Franks broke through two lines of infantry. The cataphract units were held in reserve. They used their bows instead of their lances. The Franks broke off their attack. Following several volleys from the cataphracts, the Franks started a retreat. The cataphracts then resorted to standard cavalry tactics and ran them down, destroying most of the force.

The cataphracts serve as a vital step in evolution of cavalry as a warfare platform. The mobile nature of the cataphracts was revolutionary to military theory. They were the forerunners to the modern tank and 20th-century armored tactics. Cataphracts were deadly because of their mobility, speed, and different weapons they could bring to bear on an opponent. This type of flexibility is still present on the battlefield in the armored cavalry and amphibious warfare units around the world.

William Eger

See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Franks; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with

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Comitatenses

The *comitatenses* was a large, centrally controlled field army. The army was the result of changes to the military system by Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE). The name takes its root from the word "*comitatus*," or "companions of

the emperor." In the early years, these forces remained near the emperor, but they should not be confused with his personal bodyguards, the *Scholae Palatinae*. These forces were a major overhaul of the military policies of Diocletian. It moved numerous units from the border of the empire toward more centrally located areas.

The forces themselves were a combination of military units. There was a mix of infantry legions, usually less than 1,000 men strong, infantry replacements, and cavalry *vexallationes*. These units were drawn from older established units of Diocletian's time (the Lanciarii, the Ioviani, and the Herculiani) and augmented by newly formed ranks. These newly formed ranks were largely recruited from Gaul and western Germany. The *comitatenses* was occasionally, temporarily joined by forces from the frontiers. These added forces, called *ripenses*, were referred to as *pseudocomitatenses*. The *comitatenses* were commanded by a *magister peditum* and a *magister equitum*.

The two notable changes in the military marked by Constantine's development of the *comitatenses* were the restructuring of the military order within the ranks of the army and an alteration in the larger strategy of Rome. First, the distinction between legionnaire (the infantry) and auxiliary (the light infantry and cavalry) was gone. This was replaced by new distinctions. There were now two groups: the *comitatenses* and the *limitanei*. Second, the idea of maintaining robust, well-defended borders was somewhat abandoned. The shortage of recruits and construction of Roman fortresses along the border altered the defense plan to an almost trip wire concept. The field army of the *comitatenses* would react to any large-scale military attack on the border. The fortresses and their forces would simply serve as a warning system and resist being overrun long enough for the larger field army to arrive. This is not unlike the strategy used in dynastic China or in Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

There was large contemporary criticism of Constantine I's military realignment. Several thinkers and writers of the day wrote that Constantine was more worried about his throne than the empire. They claim that this move led to the military failure of the Western Empire. There are also some who attribute Constantine's plan with the "barbarization" of the army. Both are viewed with skepticism today. The fact is that employing non-Romans in the legion was established practice. It was a simple fact of having and holding a large empire. Rome and the Roman areas of the empire could not provide enough recruits to subsist defending the vast expanse of the border. Secondly, it is highly unlikely that any of the pre-*comitatense*, frontier units could withstand a large-scale attack from an organized, numerically superior foe.

The reality of military policy at the time of Constantine was that more and more areas of the empire were paying their way out of military service. This money was in turn used for recruiting more fighters from the edges of the empire. This led to an even larger deficit of Roman recruits. Many saw the new army full of members of Germanic tribes as full of uncivilized undesirables. Despite criticisms, the army under Constantine was larger than that of Diocletian and was in no worse condition than it would have been without Constantine's reforms and changes.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; *Military*: *Limitanei*; *Notitia Dignitatum*; *Scholae Palatinae*; *Vexallationes*

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De Re Militari

The Roman writing *De Re Militari*, roughly translated to *Concerning Military Matters*, is considered one of the most important ancient texts in all of history. In terms of military study, it was the most important writing until Clauswitz's *On War*. It is the most frequently copied text of its period. Most major military leaders through the 18th century owned and studied the text, including General George Washington. Many of its main ideas and practices are still evident in the military forces today. Above them all is a commitment to discipline and training.

The work was a collection of older Roman practices and regulations compiled by Flavius Vegetius Renatus, commonly referred to as Vegetius. Little is known about Vegetius. Some texts refer to him as a nobleman, but there is ample evidence that he was not a soldier himself. The text was originally produced in 390 CE. Some see the work as a handbook for infantry training, yet this is a very simplistic description. The work is divided into five different books. Most translated versions of the work consist of only the first three books. The last two are very brief and hold value only for book collectors.

The first book is a guide to selecting and initially training new recruits for Roman forces. Vegetius's obsession with discipline and order become apparent early, stating that it was discipline and training that enabled Roman forces to defeat numerically superior forces. For this, the initial training of recruits was very important. Vegetius goes on to state that "new levies" (as some translations refer to new recruits) are best drawn from rural areas where young men are not afraid of hard work. Furthermore, he adds that training should begin at the age of puberty. The first, and most important, part of training for the new levies is learning what Vegetius refers to as "military step": marching. This is true in most militaries today. He writes that new levies should be able to march 20 miles in five hours. Additionally, they should be proficient in swimming, leaping, and the *Armatura*, the system of weapons training that included javelins, bows, and swords.

The second book of Vegetius's work deals with the organization of armies. He addresses the infantry, cavalry, and light infantry. The infantry is divided into two parts, or *corps*. The first are the legions, and the second are auxiliaries. The legions, he writes, are made of Romans, while the auxiliaries comprise foreign mercenaries. The

auxiliaries are considered inferior because of their origin. They do not have the legion's structured training described by Vegetius, hence, they are inconsistent in their performance. He writes that their numbers are necessary and with the right limited training they are useful.

A legion is made of 10 cohorts. These cohorts vary in size and prestige. The first cohort is the largest and most prestigious. This cohort, known as the "Maillarian Cohort," is made of "family men" of some education. This refers to the military institution as being a "legacy," which remains today. This first group is made of 11,005 infantry, known as *centuries*, and 132 horse cuirassiers. This is also the cohort that cares for the legion's eagle, their prized standard. The next four cohorts line up the left of the first. They are each made up of 555 infantry men and 60 mounted fighters. These first five cohorts make up the first row. The second row is comparable to the cohorts two through five in size: 555 infantry men and 60 cavalry. The distinguishing characteristic of these fighters is that they are younger. If you look down at a diagram of a legion from this era, you can trace a Roman century's career advancement. As members of the legion gain experience and accolades, they move up and to the right.

The leadership of the legion is a combination of politics and longevity. It was led by a pair of tribunes. The first tribune was selected by the emperor. The second tribune earned his position by length of service and success in battle. These two men led a very developed hierarchy of junior officers and support staff. The *draconarii* were the ensign bearers. The *tesserarii* delivered orders. The *campgnei* or *antefignani* maintained discipline and exercised the troops. The *librarii* served as bookkeepers. The combat forces were divided into groups of 100 centuries and led by *centurions*. Cavalry units were divided into groups of 32 and led by *decurions*. The third line was made up of light infantry, known as *ferentarii*, archers, and slingers.

The third book of the collection is a very early version of a platoon leader's handbook. Vegetius addresses troop welfare in detail: the need for water, care for horses, and foraging and food. He discusses disciplining troublemakers and avoiding mutiny, rules for making encampments, and basic small unit tactics. Marches can be more dangerous than battles. Leaders, he wrote, must know the terrain, roads, and traveling routes. Protect your flanks, send out reconnaissance ahead of the larger body of troops, and maintain the intervals between cohorts and groups. The last half of the third book deals with preparing and selecting engagements. Vegetius offers advice and direction on maintaining morale, where officers should fight, maneuvers, and formations in battle.

The most remarkable aspect of the *De Re Militari* is its timelessness. Many of the same instructions can be found at staff noncommissioned officers training courses and platoon leadership programs for present-day officers. It is not even just shared themes. Some of the very same information is taught today: security on road marches, close-order drills, attention to detail, and physical fitness, to name a few.

William Eger

See also: *Military*: Tribune

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Doryphoroi

The term *doryphoroi* is widely used in a variety of classical periods to describe a great number of things. The term is popularly used to describe a well-known piece of classical Greek art, the *Doryphoros of Polykleitos*. In military usage it means "spear carriers." In terms of the Eastern Roman Empire, the term is used for the higher class of mercenaries.

The Justinian-era army was made up of five different contingents. First there were the *comitatenses*. Then, the *limitanei* guarded the borders of the empire. The *foederati* were made of non-Roman warriors. The fourth group was the allied armies. The final group was the mercenaries: the *bucellari*. Within the *bucellari* were multiple levels. The *doryphoroi* were the higher class of this last group. They were superior to the *hypaspista*. They were mounted troops, according to Sigfús Blöndal. They were Goths, Huns, or "from the mountains." The *doryphoroi* were different from normal mercenaries (*bucellar*i) in that they took an oath to the emperor as well as their employer. Belisarius served as one of Justin's *doryphoroi*.

William Eger

See also: *Military*: *Bucellari*; *Comitatenses*; *Foederati*; *Limitanei*

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Dromon

Greek for "racer," *dromones* were the primary warships of the Byzantine Empire. The name also refers to a broader class of ships. It was well-known to have a wide array of weapons, most notably siphons on the bow to use Greek fire in battle. There were several different sizes and variations, though there were some consistent characteristics within the class and among the largest ships of the class. The vessel had both oars and masts. The reference to speed is based on the smaller, early *dromones*. Later models were slower but far better equipped for waging war at sea and establishing beach heads and bases for land offensives.

A study of the naval vessel warrants an initial, yet subtle warning. The use of the word "*dromon*" has two distinct meanings in the study of military history and the

period of the Byzantine Empire. First, there is its use to describe a broad collection of ships. The second use of the label *dromon* is used for the result of the evolution of ships of the entire class. While this may prove confusing at the outset, it is rather simple to understand. There are five different types of warships known to have been used by Byzantine forces: the galley, the *ousakios*, the *pamphylos*, the *drominion*, and the *dromon*. Galleys are rather generic ships used by a great many different cultures. These may be basically disregarded as relevant to the *dromon*. The *ousakios* begins the evolution of the *dromon*.

The *ousakios* is the smallest of all the ships commonly referred to as a *dromon*. It was manned by an *ousia* of 108 men. It used a single deck of rowers. The next step in naval architecture for the Byzantine Empire was the *pamphylos*. This ship was structurally very similar but used more men: three *ousia* between two ships. Finally, there was the *dromon* and the *dromonion*. The *dromonion* is a little-mentioned variant of the *dromon*.

One of the first things one might notice when looking at the artwork of the period, in manuscripts of the time, or in contemporary models of the ship is that there are different numbers of sails. Some historians state that they were single-massed ships. This is highly improbable. While a single mast might be useful to a galley or the smaller *ousakios*, it would be useless for the larger full-sized *dromon*. Hence, it is most probable that the smaller earlier versions, the *ousakios* and the *pamphylos*, had two masts and the larger *dromon* had three.

The larger *dromon* measured an estimated 130 feet long. The oars for the vessel were 30 feet long. The *dromon* carried at least three *ousia*, approximately 200 men to serve as oarsmen. Grappling and boarding were standard military practices of the day. The ship was built to carry a contingent of 100 marines, and the ram that was mounted on the bow of earlier models was replaced by a spur or beak. This enabled marines to board enemy ships easier. The 50 oarsmen on the lower deck and the 150 on the upper deck were protected by covered decks. There were two different structures on the top deck of the ship. First, there was one on the forecastle (a raised platform close to the bow). There was another around the middle of the vessel known as the *xylokastro*n (wooden castle near the main mast). Both were used to deploy various weapons.

The weapons of the *dromon* were not unlike that of Byzantine land forces. Projectiles were popular. This included everything from rocks to clay pots filled with quicklime, snakes, or scorpions. The forecastle and the *xylokastron* were perfect for deploying these types of weapons as well as stationing traditional archers. The forecastle also housed 20 mounted crossbows. Some *dromones* had their own catapults on boards, which involved very complicated systems for loading and carrying their projectiles. Finally, there was Greek fire. The ships that used this weapon were commonly referred to as "fire ships."

To learn more about the command structure of the *dromon* and the hierarchy of the Byzantine navy, we consult the *Tactica* of Emperor Leo VI. Every ship had a captain (who had an assistant), an ensign, and first officers. In battle, the captain remained at the aft of the vessel while an armed officer was posted to the bow. The last oarsman controlled the anchor. These ships would row or sail into battle with a fleet of support ships behind it. The *dromon* had little room for supplies. These ships would carry items

the warships would need: water, food, and, very important, extra arrows. They would also carry everything needed for landing parties, including horses. These ships were all shallow enough to be pulled onto the beach after they reached their destination.

This leads scholar Edward Luttwak to draw some conclusions about the performance of the *dromon*. The *dromon* were fast for various reasons. The smaller versions of the vessel were light. In fact, all of them were shallower than the future ships seen in subsequent centuries of European naval warfare. This was a severe handicap in some situations. Some *dromones* could be swamped by waves as small as six feet. This meant that open sea travel was not advisable, and that weather could play a large factor. Additionally, tacking (geometrically sailing against the wind) was very difficult.

William Eger

See also: *Military*: Greek Fire, *Tactica* of Leo VI

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Dux

The term *dux* is based on the Latin root "duce" meaning "to lead." It originally meant an officer commanding a military group above his rank. This changed in the third century when Constantine reformed the structure of the army. He separated civilian and military power. One of the results was *dux* became a regular rank. A *dux* was now tasked with commanding the troops of an entire province or multiple provinces, known as the *limitanei*. He would be responsible for all combat and noncombat military operations in his appointed area. The position of *dux* was very important to the empire after the third century. The provinces had become smaller and more numerous.

It is important to note that *dux* is a military rank and not a title. This provides a decent amount of confusion. Some titles held both military and civilian relevance. A *comes* in the civilian sector was probably something like a high-level minister. In the military sphere, this same title could be the leader of part of the *comitatenses*. In fact, the armies of the *comitatenses* were always commanded by a *comes*. *Comes* could also command regional armies or frontier armies. This sounds much like a *dux*, but historians theorize that a *comes* was superior to the *dux*. The relationship is not as complicated as it may seem.

Therein lay one of Constantine's challenges. He sought to separate military and civilian power, but in some cases, they were inseparable. Some political leaders were good generals. Some became politically successful due to their military victories. This is an old legacy that remains true to the modern day: Washington, Grant, and Eisenhower were all victorious generals. It's not unusual to find political leaders in military garb. Simply look at the British royal family. This is important because of the age-old

debate over the separation of civilian and military power. Yet, in Constantine's time, most critics claim that this was more about self-preservation.

Regardless of the political motivations of Constantine's reforms, the elevation of the *dux* served the empire well. While many generals became politicians, not all politicians had military experience. Gallienus, who ruled in some form or another from 253–268 CE, limited the military roles that senators could have. Contemporaries felt this revealed the emperor's disdain for senators. Nonetheless, this left many senators with little military experience. This was especially true over time, as the previous generation of combat-experienced politicians of the Senate died off. It created a situation perfect for the changes Diocletian started and Constantine completed. It made no sense to place troops in the charge of inexperienced politicians. This necessitated the creation of the *dux*. The last known senator in command of troops was in 260 CE.

There are some hazards in researching the *dux*. First, there are earlier references to a comparable position with a similar name: *dux ripae*. Some historians label this post a forerunner to the *dux* of Diocletian and Constantine. There is, however, one major difference. The *dux* was an independent military leader. The *dux ripae* was subordinate to the local governor. This was one of the key changes in Constantine's reform. He centralized military power to Rome. The other hazard in researching the role of the *dux* in military history is that the term was adopted by many European powers later in history. In this context, it is comparable to the term "duke."

William Eger

See also: *Organization and Administration*: Province; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; *Military*: *Comitatenses*; *Limitanei*

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Excubitors

The Excubitors were a military unit created by Emperor Leo I (r. 457–474 CE) early in Byzantine history. The Excubitors had a very cyclical history. They were prominent in two specific periods. First, they are important at the time of their inception in the fourth century. They served as the centerpiece of Leo's changes to the military. Later, the unit reemerges in the literature of the ninth century during Constantine V's (r. 741–775 CE) military reforms for much the same reason: reforming the organization of the Byzantine army. This is not wholly unusual in Byzantine military history throughout the series of reforms that the different emperors made.

The military unit was established as the imperial guard in 470 CE. Leo specifically selected men from Isauria, an area renown for tenacious fighting. He assembled the Excubitors to curtail the growing foreign influence in the army. Over time, the Excubitors grew in influence. Positions in the corps grew in prestige. The position of commander of the Excubitors, holding the rank of *domestic*, is perceived by many as having been an avenue to the throne. Most notably the future emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) commanded them under Emperor Anastasius I (r. 491–518 CE). Emperor Tiberius II (r. 574–582 CE) once commanded them. Philippicus, Emperor Maurice's (r. 582–602 CE) brother-in-law, served as their commander as well.

The elite nature of the Excubitors did not immediately warrant them their power. According to J. B. Bury, this change took place between 680 and 765 CE. They slowly replaced the *Scholae Palatinae*. They were the original palace guards established by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE). The pivotal point in their decline was during Justinian's reign. He started auctioning positions within the *Scholae* and sent able-bodied recruits home. They slowly lapsed in ability and importance. Eventually, the *Scholae Palatinae* was little more than a parade unit of the palace.

The Excubitors reappear prominently in texts of the late eighth century when Emperor Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE) reformed the military following the suppression of a coup. After defeating Artabasdos at the Battle of Sardis, Constantine changed the structure of the army. Some units, known as the *tagmata*, remained in the center of the empire. Other units remained around the periphery and border areas. These were known as the *limitanei*. When creating the new *tagmata* units, the Excubitors were one of the units included. This was done in part to give the unit prestige because of its previous legacy during the reign of Leo. These units were originally around only a thousand men. As the empire sought to expand during the Age of Reconquest, these armies could reach well over 5,000 men.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Anastasius, Flavius; Constantine the Great; Justinian; Maurice; *Military*: *Limitanei*; *Scholae Palatinae*; *Tagmata*

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Foederati

Foederati is the generic name for non-Roman soldiers serving in the regular army on a special agreement. The name is taken from the *foedus*, an agreement between the

Goths and Emperor Theodosius in 382 CE. The *foederati* initially comprised small numerous groups but later comprised large, ethnically homogenous fighters. The military impact of the evolution of the *foederati* is very significant, but recent study lends to speculation that it was larger for the fate of the empire.

The evolution of the *foederati* is marked. Historians point out that the *foederati* started as groups of fighters gathered around a leader. Their ethnic composition, in the beginning, was somewhat diverse. These groups would agree to a *foedus* with the Roman government. This was an agreement to serve under Roman command in exchange for salutary neglect. The groups, and later whole tribes, would maintain their own leaders and customs, yet answer to the Roman military commanders.

The practice was symbiotic. *Foederatus* served as one of the main sources of military force of the empire. In the fourth century, defeats tarnished the reputation of the army. Romans resisted recruitment. This led to a lower quality of solders, and an additional source for fighters was needed. Barbarian tribesmen filled the void. Once more, foederati fought when needed and would return to their homes after. This meant that leaders did not have to fear threats of mutiny or coup from standing armies. The tribes benefited from the *foedii* by enjoying the perks of this role in the empire: security, land, money, etc. Some even gained their citizenship.

Emperor Constantine sought to maintain "two forces and one army," but it was impossible. The *foederati* evolution completed in the sixth century. In the fifth century, some *foederati* were compensated with land or money. Later in the early sixth century, Romans were admitted. By the mid-sixth century, most infantrymen were *foederati*. At this point the *foederati* were not much different from other army units. They were paid, disciplined, and trained the same way. This is important to remember when reading classical texts like *De Re Militari* or the *Tactica* of Leo VI. A study of the

MILITARY SPECIALISTS

The most important aspect of the foederati might be that they were culturally unassimilated in most cases. Unlike members of the standing army, they were not drilled in standard Roman warfare. This provided commanders with flexibility and a certain element of surprise. These groups, known as *ethnikoi*, provided Roman armies with non-Roman tactics and abilities. There were some non-Roman troops that used spears, like the Goths and Heruls, but they also used their own distinct weapons. Some groups brought whole new forms of battle or tactics to use in the Roman army. Huns and other horse-mounted archers provided expertise on the battlefield during combat. Historians refer to this as the "barbarization" of the Roman legion. This process provided the first real cavalry units in the Roman army. The same fighters not only introduced the West to cavalry but were exceptional scouts. There were also Franks, Khazars, Rus', and Arabs ethnikoi units. While many of these fighters would integrate and assimilate, some of their weapons and tactics made their way into the established Byzantine way of war. These units were essential in the evolution of the Western way of war from its infantry roots. Cavalry, slingers, and archers became the norm over a period because of these first foederati units.

William Eger

foederati's evolution is important to researching the army. The vocabulary changes over time and can be confusing. By the sixth century, the *foederati* were a mix of Romans and other ethnic groups. At this point, the ethnically grouped, non-Roman *foederati* units are best described as allies to the armies in the east.

A larger discussion about the role of the *foederati* emerged in the early 20th century. The discussion is based on the idea of the Barbarization of the Roman army. This refers to the belief that the adaptation of the Roman army to the new barbarian forces led it to weaken. There is ample evidence to disprove this. The *foederati* and their leaders were basically loyal to Rome. As far as their ability, there is more evidence of the opposite: barbarians improved the fighting capabilities of the legion. These historians refer to the superior horsemanship of many of the non-Roman forces.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Military*: *De Re Militari*; *Tactica* of Leo VI

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Greek Fire

Greek fire was a very destructive and feared weapon of the Byzantine maritime forces, used in the first century CE. It allowed Byzantine naval forces to withstand the Arab siege of Constantinople from 671–678 CE. Greek fire is commonly used as an example of chemical weaponry in the Classical Age. Byzantines called it "marine fire," "liquid fire," or "artificial fire." Ships of the Byzantine navy, known as *dromones*, were outfitted with pivoting spouts that would spew a fiery substance at foes.

These *dromones* were known as "fire ships" and were very destructive in battle. The mechanics of the spouts was somewhat rudimentary. A system of pipes attached large heated holding tanks of the liquid below deck with the spouts mounted above deck. When the liquid was pumped out of the spouts, a torch was used to ignite it as it expelled. This created a stream of fiery, viscous liquid that burned most everything in its path. What's more, water could not extinguish the flammable discharge. It stuck to and consumed all types of wood and cloth. This included ships, their masts, and the clothing of opposing forces. There are also reports of handheld weapons that used the same principle.

The true origins of Greek fire are shrouded in some mystery and legend. It was reported that Greek fire was a secret divulged by an angelic messenger ordering the Byzantines not to share the divine gift with anyone. There are several different theories behind its true composition, but the actual chemical makeup is unknown. Unfortunately, the method for making Greek fire and its components was lost during the First

This image, found in the 11th–12th century Madrid Skylitzes, shows the use of Greek fire during a naval battle. Greek fire was a Byzantine incendiary weapon with origins in the classical era. The Byzantines kept the ingredients a secret, and its exact composition is still unknown. The liquid, which could burn on top of water, was instrumental in Byzantine naval warfare. (Heritage Images/Getty Images)

Crusade. Its creator, Callinicus, and his family retained the true formula, and when they died, the formula died with them. Historians have definitively deduced two aspects of the weapon. First, Greek fire, as it was used by the Byzantine forces, was the mastermind of Callinicus. Second, it was far from an original compound.

Callinicus (or Kallinikos depending on the text) brought the idea to Constantinople in 678 CE. Some historians refer to him as an "oil man." He engineered the plumbing used aboard the ships and had the formula for the liquid. The liquid itself was the result of an evolution of many different earlier incendiary weapons. The basis for Greek fire can be traced back to Islamic land forces that used similar weapons, *magonels* and *naffatuns*. These weapons used a flammable substance called *naptha*. In many regards it was a comparable weapon, but since the true formula of Greek fire was lost, historians only hypothesize about it. The Greek fire used by the Byzantines was distilled oil. Resins were used in the process. These might have been turpentine, saltpeter, wax, or sulfur. The product was a thick substance with the flammability of modern kerosene or gasoline.

Greek fire is one of many examples of nonconventional weapons of the era. The basic principle of it and very similar weapons found their way into battles later in history. Medieval European forces would use a comparable scientific principle on enemy troops trying to breach castle walls. They would dump hot tar on the men trying to storm the gates and then light it on fire by dropping torches. Flamethrowers were used in other Western wars until their prohibition after the Second World War. The most modern application of the principle was napalm.

William Eger

EARLY CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

The development of early chemical and biological weapons was slow and occurred in stops and starts. Greek fire was only one of the different nonconventional weapons of the time. Its initial use was strictly naval and somewhat limited. However, texts mention polluting wells and streams as early as the fourth century BCE. The advent of early siege weapons gave the chemical and biological weapons development momentum. Projectile weapons were key in this regard. Curare was used to poison the tips of arrows by numerous military forces of the period. This was despite the danger involved with preparing it. Catapults and slings are far more notable. There are various mentions of using pots filled with scorpions and snakes in battle throughout antiquity. As the pots would smash on their targets, they would disperse whatever venomous creatures they carried. These weapons left their intended targets with a choice: keep fighting or worry about being bitten or stung. Additionally, these creatures could scurry away and hide in the fortifications to kill more people later if they were not dispatched immediately. Later, some forces would catapult corpses of plague victims over city walls during sieges. This weapon was more ominous, as even touching the dead bodies could infect a person. There were prohibitions against using these weapons, but these rules had only limited impact.

William Eger

See also: *Military*: *Dromon*; *Primary Documents*: Document 21

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Hetairoi

The *hetairoi*, also commonly referred to as the *hetaireia* in some texts, were the imperial bodyguards of the emperor. The word translates to “companionships” in Greek, and there are similar positions within other military organizations of the classical period. Homer refers to the Myrmidons as Achilles’s *hetairoi*. The Macedonian Kingdom borrows reference from the word as well, meaning a basic political institution with a certain allegiance and camaraderie associated with it. There are subtle differences. In Macedonia, they were made up of the upper-class landowners who socialized with but also fought alongside the king. In Byzantium, these men were mercenaries and foreign fighters.

The Byzantine Empire used foreign mercenaries for centuries. In the sixth century, these forces were referred to as *foederati*, meaning “allies.” Later, in around 840 CE, a

1,000-man cavalry unit was formed. Members of this unit became known as the *hetairoi*, meaning "companionships." They provided security for the emperor at the Sacred Castle and for him whenever he left. The *hetairoi* would accompany him on hunting trips. They accompanied him into battle. This type of proximity and camaraderie lent these fighting men as much of a role as the emperor's entourage as personal security. At this time, the *hetairoi* were largely made of Khazak and Iranian forces, but not exclusively to these groups. The different ethnic groups formed the different units of the force. They were subdivided into three groups: "Great Companionships, "Middle Companionships," and "Minor Companionships." In the 10th century, there is also a mention of a companionship of infantry *hetairoi*.

The use of mercenaries as bodyguards was not uncommon to the Byzantine military structure. It happened frequently (the Varangian Guard for example). These fighting men would provide their sovereign with security and even companionship without him having to worry about loyalties, plots, or politics. It is representative of one of the primary concerns of Byzantine emperors for much of Byzantine history: preservation of their reign and the military as a political actor. Using foreign mercenaries helped prevent assassinations and plots to overthrow the emperor.

William Eger

See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Khazars; *Military*: *Foederati*; Varangian Guard

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Limitanei

The name itself refers to troops stationed at the *limes*. *Limes* is a term that evolved to mean the border areas of the Roman Empire. The term *limitanei* was eventually used to broadly describe the frontier units established in Constantine's military reform. Constantine's changes upended the established military order and divided the Roman army into a standing army and frontier troops. The better frontier troops were the *ripenses*. Along with the *alae*, *cohorts*, and the auxiliaries, they composed the *limitanei*. The units were largely formed by old legions and auxiliaries. Other new units were added as well. These were referred to as *numeri* and *cunei*. Another change to the

structure from Constantine's reforms was command. *Limitanei* were no longer commanded by provincial leaders but by a *dux*, a regional military leader. At times these units augmented the *comitatenses*. These units were referred to as *psuedocomitatenses*.

There are disputes about the actual origins of the *limitanei* and their real purpose. Some historians maintain that Diocletian established armies on the frontier. These troops, not yet known as *limitanei*, were thought to have extra motivation in battle because they were fighting on or near their homelands. John Malalas credits him with quartering these forces in forts along the border. Because of this, some earlier histories described the *limitanei* as lesser quality, militia-type forces. Over time evidence dispelled this. There is no practical reason a military commander would add inferior forces to his own as *psuedocomitatenses*. The *limitanei* were clearly somewhat inferior. It was law. The best warriors went to the *comitatenses*, but still maintained some standards. This quality question harkens a larger question in the study of antiquity. The Roman ruler responsible for the genesis of the *limitanei* is a point of contention: Diocletian or Constantine? This is due in great part to the debate over the collapse of the empire and the barbarization of the legion, as many refer to it. Constantine more frequently bears the blame, despite the belief of many historians that the quality of the forces in the army didn't decline.

Additionally, there is an alternative theory to the evolution of the *limitanei* in Constantine's military reform. This theory refers to a decline in military service among Romans. Many villages and towns with a quota to fill and the rich families of Rome bought their way out of the military. They paid their way out of having to send their sons to serve. This money was, in turn, used to purchase the service of forces elsewhere. Karen R. Dixon and Pat Southern point out that by the fourth and fifth centuries, *limitanei* were paid like soldiers of the regular army.

This completes the evolution of the military under Constantine. He sought to complete the change that Diocletian started, perhaps inadvertently. The Roman military was no longer separated by class and ability with centurions at the top of the pecking order. The army was now more consistent in its abilities but separated by geography. Again, the *comitatenses* were superior forces, but demarcations within the Roman forces had more to do with a warrior's location. This enabled Constantine to advance a larger strategy: using a string of fortifications manned by *limitanei* to serve as an impediment to invading forces. The *limitanei* could hold off or at least slow down invaders until the larger regular army, the *comitatenses*, arrived. This is not an unusual strategy for larger empires and states throughout military history.

William Eger

See also: *Military*: *Comitatenses*; *Dux*

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Notitia Dignitatum

The *Notitia Dignitatum* is one of the last known documents of the united Roman Empire. Michael Kulikowski calls it "the greatest surviving document of the Roman Empire." It is a blueprint for the administration of the late Roman Empire. There are several contentious debates about the *Notita Dignitatum*. One of them is the question of its origin. Most historians acknowledge that the two parts (Eastern and Western) were written at different times but argue over exactly when. The base text was written between 386 and 394 CE and is Eastern in its origins. It would have to be because the final division of the empire occurred in 395 CE. The Western portion was last updated in 419 CE. It is also important to point out that the document and its comprising parts underwent multiple revisions. Another factor in some academic disputes involves the translations and their accuracies.

The *Notitia Dignatatum* is essentially a record of the administration of the Roman Empire and also gives an account of the distribution of various military units, ranks, and numbers. This illustration shows the insignia of various military units, under the authority of the *magister peditum*, the chief military commander for all infantry in the empire. (The Picture Art Collection/Alamy Stock Photo)

The *Notitia Dignitatum* establishes the table of organization for the administration of the Roman Empire. It establishes the government structure and military commands. It assigns titles, reporting relationships, and, in some cases, insignia. The document divides the Eastern Empire up into "the East" and Illyricum and creates the positions of praetorian prefects for each. Each praetorian prefect is assigned a sizable staff with specific responsibilities. Constantinople is given special status with its own manager named the prefect of the city. A manager of offices runs military training schools and arsenals. A Count of Sacred Bounties (Count of the Sacred Largesses), administers the logistical materials and commerce. A Count of Private Domain (Count of the Private Estate)se serves as a tax collector. The *Notitia Dignitatum* then

breaks the East down into smaller political units: proconsuls of larger areas with subordinates carrying the titles of president, count, or vicar. The document then does the same for the Western Empire. It divides the greater part of this portion of the empire into Italy and Gaul, which each have a praetorian perfect. Rome maintains an exceptional status like Constantinople.

The military aspects of the *Notitia Diginatum* are just as specific. It establishes the difference between the border armies made of *limitanei* and *ripenses* and the standing army, the *comitatenses*. It also prescribes the size of each of the units. The smaller parts of the empire led by presidents, counts, and vicars are also given a military table of organization specific to the area. It is very detailed. For instance, Scythia is the only area of the East with cavalry stationed permanently, according to the document. Yet, there is an abundance of cavalry units in the West. Much of the cavalry in the East remains under the control of the master of soldiers.

A more recent debate surrounding the *Notitia Dignitatum* is the true use of the document. The traditional interpretation was literal. The document was an administrative plan for the empire. The discrepancies and contradictions that illustrate multiple authors and different production dates were irrelevant. It was taken at face value. A competing theory that the document was "ideological" emerged. This places the document in historical context. The parts of the manuscript were combined into the *Notitia Dignitatum* we see today when the empire was in decline. The document, some say, was an attempt to convey an image of unity, cohesion, and stability. In short, while true to the traditional interpretation in many aspects, it was propaganda.

William Eger

See also: *Military*: *Comitatenses*; *Limitanei*

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Noumeroi

The basic military unit of the Byzantine military is called the *noumeroi* or "*numeri*." The word and name appear in different ways in classical texts. The first use of the term as a common noun evolves. Earlier in the shared Roman-Byzantine eras of military organization, the *numeri* began as a specific unit within the Roman and Byzantine

military hierarchy: legions, *alae*, cohorts, *numeri*. Later, as the Roman and Byzantine militaries diverged, the term came to mean simply a military unit.

Numeri started in the forces of the Roman Empire. They were from barbarian tribes. Scholars differ on who developed the idea of using these warriors. Scholars give several Roman emperors credit. Some say Trajan (r. 98–117 CE); others Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180 CE); some Hadrian (r. 117–135 CE). They fought in various battles. Sometimes they were referred to as the name of the tribes that composed them. These names took different fashions overtime. The *numeri* played a role in Byzantine military history as well. They formed part of the *limitanei*, served in the *tagmata* and were led by tribunes. Nevertheless, Constantine I incorporated them into the larger Byzantine military force by consolidating power through his military reforms. This left the name "*numeri*" for another use by units that remained in the capital.

As the military organization of the Byzantine Empire took its own shape, the name took a different meaning. They served as "household guards." These troops never left the city. A count or other ranking officer called a *domestic* commanded them. This leader was referred to as the Count of the Walls. His duty and mission were to defend the city and man the gates. These later units had little impact on history.

William Eger

See also: *Military*: *Limitanaei*; *Tagmata*; Tribune

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Pamphylians

Pamphylians were a people who inhabited a small part of Asia Minor along the Gulf of Adalia which is the southern coastal plain of present-day Turkey. Much of what is known about them is contested. Some linguists argue that they earned their name by being a mixture of races, or *Pamphyli*, a Greek term meaning "mix of races." Historians claim the area was named "Pamphylia" by Mopsus, after one of his daughters. Little is known of their language other than that it is close to Greek. There are several

different theories behind the people and their cities. Greeks entered the region in the seventh century BCE, and the people were already there. Stephen Colvin cites that Pamphylians arrived at the region after the Trojan War. Others dispute this. What can be confirmed is that the region and its people belonged to different empires over time.

The settlers of Pamphylia settled several towns: Olbia, Magydus, Aspendus, and Side. Some speculate that the city of Side was made of foreign immigrants, while the rest were wholly made of Greeks. Pamphylia was part of the Hittite Kingdom for a period. Then, it belonged to a kingdom called Tarhuntassa. After establishing itself as a rather prosperous trading area, it was conquered by the Lydians and, then, the Persians. The Pamphylian port cities of Perge and Side continued trading with Greek kingdoms and city-states. Several of the larger cities were treated as independent city-states. Most of the nation enjoyed some measure of salutary neglect. The mid-fifth and sixth centuries BC saw the Athenians and Persians fight over the area and trade it back and forth. In the fourth century it was conquered by Alexander the Great. Later the country was ruled by the Ptolemes, then the Seleucids.

Archeological evidence supports that Pamphylians continued to exercise a certain amount of independence. Andrew Meadows and Pater Thonemann refer to the state being led by a "Pamphyliarch." They hypothesize that Ptolemy endeavored to use his authority to simply encourage continued trade rather than rule more traditionally. This was different from the political experience of neighboring states.

Roman control came in 188 CE. Rome ceded Pamphylia to Pergamon. A new city, Attalia, was founded in 150 CE and was known for its olive oil. Proximity again made Pamphylia a target for naval attacks. The navies of the Seleucid and Rhodes kept piracy in check in the past. Pirates made Coracesium, an eastern Pamphylian town, their headquarters. The Romans took notice and forged an anti-piracy law.

Roman praetor Antonius pursued the pirates with the help of forces from Rhodes and Byzantium. The Roman navy had fallen into disrepair and had to confiscate ships from tributary nations. The logical base for such a campaign against pirates in the region was Pamphylia. In addition to Antonius's force, Rome sent out a declaration that all allied states and tributaries were to offer no quarter or toleration to piracy. The Romans sought freedom of the seas yet left much of the work to the regional governments and states. They eventually defeated the pirates. Pamphylia became part of the Roman province of Cilicia at the close of the millennium. Subsequent Roman emperors shifted the nation from one province to another. In the fourth century CE, it became a province of its own.

William Eger

See also: *Key Places*: Antioch

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Pentarchs

A pentarch is the leader of a five-man group in the Byzantine army. It is the lowest of the junior officers. Two pentarchs reported to a *dekarch*, who was responsible for 10 men and himself. Ten dekarchs reported to a *hekatontarch*, who commanded 100 or so men. The position was equivalent to an older position in the army, *biacrus*. The position appears and disappears intermittently in various texts of the classical age. The first mention of the rank appears in Maurice's *Strategicon*, published in the late 6th century. The position disappeared for some 300 years and is absent from the military writings of Saint Demetrius (682–684 CE) and Saint Philaretus (785 CE). Pentarchs reappear in the organizational charts of the early 10th century.

This absence and other minor factors led subsequent scholars to question the existence and role of the pentarchs. Some authors believe that Maurice might have simply made the term up. They theorize that it was not a title in the truest sense of the word, only a description. Despite the academic validity of their arguments, all military logic defies them. The leaders who consulted the *Strategicon* in the ages that followed clearly took Maurice to mean pentarchs are a position, and the practice has been successful.

Pentarchs might seem like a minor role in the army: the lowest officer rank. However, they might have been the most important. The equivalent in the militaries of today is the junior NCO (corporal, etc.). Well-trained junior officers are essential to the success of any military organization. It fulfills very essential needs of an armed force in a variety of ways. The rank of junior officer or NCO is the doorway to a military career for many. This provides armies with depth and experience. They ensure troop welfare through direction, discipline, and training. Modern-day junior officers and NCOs, like the pentarchs, are the backbone of fighting forces.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Maurice; *Military*: *Strategicon*

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Scholae Palatinae

The *Scholae Palatinae* were the imperial guard of the late Roman Empire. Their official establishment was somewhat slow. Once established, they replaced the mounted cavalry troops of the Praetorian Guard. The Praetorians remained but declined. The *Scholae Palatinae* remained the mounted guard of the emperor until being replaced by the Excubitors. They enjoyed a revival during the military reforms of Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE). Both the *Scholae* and the Excubitors were the first two of the *tagma* of the newly formed *tagmata* in the eighth century.

The origins of the *Scholae Palatinae* can be traced back to the reign of Septimus Severus (r. 193–211 CE) in the late second and early third centuries. Junior officers of the legion started forming clubs. Some became rather strong and were almost like military units themselves, yet they remained ad hoc and loose organizations. The third century was tumultuous, with a succession of emperors with rather short reigns. Diocletian ascended to the throne in 284 CE. He chose to downgrade the Praetorian Guard. This had been the imperial guard but had grown very powerful.

The Praetorian Guard was established earlier in the history of the empire. Over time their leader, the praetorian prefect, had become a very powerful person within the empire. This became problematic as the guard went from being the emperor's guard to power brokers. If the guard disagreed with an emperor and wanted him replaced, they simply killed him. They went so far as to auction off the throne to the highest bidder in 193 CE. That year, the winning bidder was Emperor Didius Julianus. His reign lasted less than a year and ended when the Praetorians assassinated him. A similar fate met six more emperors in the next 100 years. The imperial guard had become a threat.

Diocletian established the first rendition of the *Scholae Palatinae* in 293 CE. This was shortly after declaring a Tetrarchy and splitting the empire up into four different parts. The fragmented empire caused an increase in provincial power and, subsequently, regional allegiances. The disgruntled Praetorians supported Maxentius, who ruled the Western Empire starting in 306 CE. Diocletian, leading the East, didn't even visit Rome until 308 CE. Predictably, rivalries emerged, and the Tetrarchy did not hold. In 312 CE, Emperor Constantine's forces, including the *Scholae Palatinae*, defeated Maxentius's forces, including the Praetorian Guard, at the Battle of Milvian Bridge. Afterward, Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) abolished the cavalry of the Praetorians and destroyed their camp, *Castra Praetoria*. While they were not completely gone, the Praetorians were now permanently subjugated. The Praetorians formed new elite classes in the field army, the *vexallationes palatinae* and *legiones palatinae*.

The *Scholae Palatinae* were different from their predecessors. First, the *Scholae* reported more directly to the emperor through a *magister officorum* (master of offices). This ensured that nobody could assume a powerful role like the previous praetorian prefect. Second, they were an example of Eastern influence. The *Scholae* was all cavalry. This represents a break from established Western military tradition of the time.

There was still infantry, but cavalry was a military priority. This was due to topography, upbringing, and contact with other non-Roman cultures to the east. The *Scholae* served as the elite troops in the fourth century. Initially, there were only five *Scholae*, numbering 500 men each. Later, it grew. Eventually, there were five in the West and another seven in the East, totaling 6,000 mounted fighters.

Things changed in the fifth century. Emperors seldom took the field of battle. Hence, the *Scholae Palatinae* became palace guards in the fifth century. Their decline came in the early sixth century. By then Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) was emperor. Their fate could probably be construed as worse than that of the Praetorian Guardsmen they replaced. Justinian auctioned off positions in the *Scholae*. He sent able-bodied cavalrymen home. This continued until the *Scholae* was little more than a parade unit at the palace. The *Scholae Palatinae* were eventually replaced by the Excubitors. The *Scholae* remained a ceremonial unit until the eighth century when Constantine V reformed the military into two parts: *tagmata* and theme (also known as the *limitanei*). The *Scholae* remained in the interior of the empire, as did the other three tagma units, while the *limitanei* guarded the border areas.

The history of the *Scholae Palatinae* is tinged with the power politics of ancient Rome. They were created to end the power of praetorian prefects and give the emperor a more loyal fighting force. Within a few centuries, they were replaced by the Excubitors. Later, they were revived for the same reason they were established: loyalty. In the wake of an insurrection, Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE) wanted a fighting force he could trust.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Master of Offices; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Praetorian Guard; *Military*: Excubitors; *Limitanei*; *Tagmata*; *Vexallationes*

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Scutari

The *scutari* or "*scutati*" were the most versatile of the heavy infantry in the late Roman and Byzantine armies. Their name is derived from their shields. Charles Oman writes in his work *The History of the Art of War* that when engaged by cavalry, light infantry would retreat behind the *scutari* that would create a defensive wall with their rectangular curved shields called *scutum*. These troops served as the backbone for the army.

The shield displayed here, called a *scutum*, was a typical defensive weapon of the Roman legions during the Republic and early Empire. Soldiers in the front ranks could overlap them into a formation called the *testudo* ("turtle") to provide maximum protection for close-quarter fighting. (Yale University Art Gallery)

Tactically, the *scutati* were in the center of the line of the Byzantine army. They were flanked by cavalry on either "wing." Some historians allege that the *scutati* would attack only other infantry. Yet others claim that the *scutati* would fight both cavalry and infantry. There is consensus in the armor of the heavy infantry. They wore short mail shirts, scale mail corsets, or chest plates. These are somewhat comparable. There is also agreement that these warriors wore helmets and carried the large shields that earned them their name. Historians conflict over the weaponry of the *scutati*. There are accounts of *scutati* carrying deadly sharp spears with brass points that were almost two inches long. These accounts also mention short swords. Another collection of scholars write that the group carried short and heavy battle axes with a blade on one side and a spike on the other.

It is important to note the strategic traditions of the Byzantine military when researching the heavy infantry. There is a very strong Eastern tradition of mobile warfare. Cavalry was king. Infantry, especially light infantry, was inferior. This was noted in the *Strategicon* and the *Tactica*. This predilection toward mounted warfare is based on two things: topography and interactions with non-Western armies.

This made the *scutati* that much more important. First, they served as the pivot point for any cavalry attack. They engaged the other infantry or cavalry force and

THE BANE OF THE HEAVY INFANTRY

One of the deadliest innovations of the Middle Ages was the crossbow. The Chinese developed the earliest crossbows between the 4th and 5th centuries BCE. They continually improved them until they appeared in the 10th century and the First Crusade. It was a deadly weapon that took very little training to use and made most armor useless. Training an archer or long bowman took months. Instructing someone to use a crossbow took an afternoon. Furthermore, loading a crossbow took only moments and had a greater rate of fire. Governments and the church regarded the crossbow as a despicable weapon and a clear violation of the established traditions of war. The socioeconomic implications are obvious. A commoner in combat, a foot solder could easily wound a mounted, landowning, armored member of the upper class with it. The weapon posed a serious threat to the knight and challenged the status of heavy infantry. Armor and shields like that of the scutari were of little use against a crossbow's bolts. This led Pope Innocent II to ban their use against Christians a few different times to no avail. Especially favored in defending fortified positions and castles, the crossbow contributed to the emergence of siege warfare in the 15th and 16th centuries.

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allowed the mounted wings in the Byzantine formation to swoop down onto the enemy. The *scutati* also served to establish the field of battle and hold the line. Without their heavy armor, opposing cavalry troops or heavy infantry could have rode or hacked through the light infantry, who had no defensive armor or limited close-combat-fighting weapons. Most light infantry had a bow and spears that were somewhat useless in hand-to-hand combat. The heavy infantry of the late Roman and Byzantine forces served as the only true defense against cavalry until the emergence of the Swiss pike corps and innovation of the crossbow.

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See also: *Military*: *Strategicon*; *Tactica* of Leo VI

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Strategicon

Strategicon, widely known as the *Strategicon* of Maurice, is a military treatise written between 575 and 628 CE by Byzantine Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602 CE). He is regarded

as one of the greatest Byzantine rulers. He himself was a soldier who had commanded troops on both fronts of the empire. He was familiar with a soldier's basic equipment, weapons, and everyday life. Maurice tasked himself with reformation of the Roman army, something other emperors attempted with far less success than Maurice. The "Handbook of Strategy" Maurice wrote molded the army into the force that helped preserve the Byzantine Empire into the 10th century. One of Maurice's notable achievements was diminishing the role of the *bucellari* and assigning them to a theme. This moved them from the command of the elite paymasters into the control of the government. In short, he reinstituted state supremacy in military affairs and waging war.

There is dispute over the authorship of the *Strategicon*. Some historians contend that all evidence supports the contention that Maurice was the author. Others point out that the main manuscript is credited to an amateur poet and tactician, Urbikios. Others theorize that Maurice's brother-in-law, Philippicus, wrote the work after serving with him. However, it is important to remember that it would not be out of the realm of possibility for an emperor to commission a work. The deniable fact is that this work, unlike *De Re Militari*, was written by a soldier.

The *Strategicon* was originally written in 11 different books. A 12th book was added later. The books are divided into smaller subsections. The work deals with different aspects of military operations. The work is written for the common soldier and even includes slang and pictures. Book I deals with training and drilling of troops. This is very reminiscent of the *De Re Militari*. It goes into detail about the basic equipment for cavalrymen, down to the number of arrows each is to have. It addresses armor and armaments for both men and their mounts.

Book I discusses the organization, structure, and ranks within the army. The leader of the army is the general. His second in command is the lieutenant general, or *hypostrategos*. The *merarch* commands units called *meros*, or division. A *meros* is made of three *moiras*. *Moiras* are 2,000 to 3,000 men each. A *moira* is made up of *tagma*. *Tagmas* are 300 to 400 men each. A tribune, or count, commands *tagmas*. *Pentarchs* command 5 men. *Dekarchs* command 10 men. *Hekatonarches* command 100 men. All are hand-selected by the tribune, including one *ilarch*. The *ilarch* is a *hekatonarch* who is also second in command of the *tagma*. After establishing this hierarchy, Maurice addresses the duties of combat and support personnel, including medical corpsmen and surveyors. The remainder and a large portion of book I cover military law and military conduct.

Book II is devoted to battle formations. It sets guidelines for depth of formations, troop intervals, the role of support personnel in battle, and the role of spies and scouts. Maurice writes that superior officers should be stationed in "safe places." His fear, he writes, is that the falling of a prominent officer could hurt resolve and morale within the rank and file troops. The officers, in short, are to remain with their troops up to the moment of combat and, then, retire. In addition to this, Maurice sets standards for communication in battle. The forces use flags, trumpets, heralds, and battle cries.

Book III is entitled "Formations of the Tagma" and is full of diagrams. It provides tribunes with not only formations, but drilling language: "About face," "Close ranks," etc. These, of course, are still in use today by all conventional military forces. Ironically, book IV deals with planning and timing ambushes. It includes a section on irregular formations. It is probably the oldest written guide to nonlinear,

nonconventional guerilla tactics in Western military history. Maurice refers to the tactics of the Scythians as an example. Book V is a short guide and advice on baggage trains. Book VI is a collection of enemy tactics to practice countering. It is not dissimilar to the training given to mock opposing forces during field training exercises today.

Book VII is a list and a guide of preparations for the 24 to 36 hours before and immediately after a battle. The book deals with intelligence and scouts, assessing the enemy, timing of committing troops, and caring for the wounded. There is ample direction on the material preparation for battle, especially care for horses. Maurice also writes about leadership: giving motivational speeches to troops, consulting with subordinates, etc. The largest sections of the book are devoted to how to end battles both in victory in defeat. Maurice urges leaders not to be reluctant to accept favorable terms in defeat. Basically, his advice is to abandon the field as soon as hostilities are concluded for safety reasons. Ironically, the text also basically calls for "no quarter." It encourages military leaders not to defeat opponents but destroy them.

Book VIII is a collection of general instructions and maxims. It is very similar to book III of the *De Re Militari*. The topics are varied, dealing with everything from spies, to troop welfare, and the causes of war. Book IX deals with surprise attacks. It includes attacks at night, incursions to reconnoiter, and taking civilians hostage for intelligence gathering. Book X is seemingly far different. Its topic is siege warfare. It offers solutions for security around a defended city. It advises spreading men along the city wall and using only trusted men to protect the city gates. It details how to capture rainwater to live off of while under siege. Book XI offers insight into the Byzantine and Roman experience as well as that of the author. It is a compilation of sections written about specific enemies. The first section addresses dealing with the Persians. It calls Persia a "wicked" nation full of people who follow their rulers "out of fear." Persians, Maurice writes, do not like cold or wet weather. He offers their typical battle formations and tactics. He offers comparable information on "Avars, Turks and Others Whose Way of Life Resembles That of Hunnish People," as well as the, Slavs, Franks, Lombards, and "Long-Haired Peoples."

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See also: *Individuals*: Maurice; *Military*: *Bucellari*; *De Re Militari*; *Tagmata*; Themes; Tribune

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Strategika

Strategika is the genre of military writings from the Byzantine Empire. The *Strategika* is one of the greatest contributions to civilization from the empire. It was rather

important to the empire in its time, as well. A quick scan of a contemporary map of the Byzantine Empire shows a large empire surrounded by its enemies. To the west, there were the barbarian tribes of central and Eastern Europe. The Islamic forces lay in wait to the south. The Mongols and other select non-Western militaries sat to the east. The Byzantine Empire sat at the crossroads of different worlds. To wit, it seemingly found itself at almost constant war with one or the other if not two.

The *Strategika* is also representative of the non-Western nature of the civilization and culture. There are many celebrated military theorists and strategists from the European world: Clausewitz, Jomini, and others. Yet, the *Strategika* is inherently Eastern in two fashions. Strategically, it has far more in common with the military theorists from the Middle and Far East. The collection shares an approach to war and strategic logic close to the works of Sun Tzu, Ta'i Kung, and Wei Liao-tzu. This approach to war is a pragmatic approach to a violent endeavor. It is rather comparable to Joseph Nye's contemporary idea of "smart power."

This non-Western approach to war is easily encapsulated. War is to be avoided. It is expensive, bloody, and unpopular. It should ever be eliminated from the list of options. Angeliki E. Laiou studied the *Strategika* and found five different justifications for war: self-defense, recovery of territory, breaches of agreements, averting greater evil, and the pursuit of peace. These are drawn from analysis, yet they differ a great deal from the ideas of jihad and crusade that surrounded the Byzantine Empire. There is little mention of a "God's war" in the *Strategika*. This type of idea is well documented in some interpretations of the Koran. It is also evident in some early Catholic teachings. European monarchs and Rome sought to justify and control the violence of war by writing codes of conduct: chivalry, etc. They justified war with religion. They never dissuaded it as the Eastern writings of the *Strategika* and Far East did.

The *Strategika* shares another consistency with non-Western practices. Their tactics are very similar. Western knights of Europe had a love of battle and heralded reckless bravery. They would declare it was "God's will" and charge headlong into battle with a very high cost of human life. The *Strategicon* and the *Tactica* included no such advice. These writings went to great lengths to strain military leaders of the Byzantine Empire to fight smart. Like Sun Tzu and the other Chinese masters of military doctrine, Maurice (r. 582–602 CE) and Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE) urged commanders to avoid the battle if goals could be achieved without it. Leaders were directed to be selective about the conditions, time, and place when battle was inevitable. W. W. How explains this in detail. His keen analysis illustrates how the Persians followed the same thought process.

The *Strategika* and its non-Western counterparts addressed similar forces. These military croups relied largely on cavalry. This orientation is logical based on the topography of their battle theaters: largely flat plains with some rolling hills. Infantry was used, but only when the terrain made cavalry operations impossible or too risky. This created a very early version of third-generation warfare. This is a warfare based on movement. This concept would be refined in the West during the First and Second World Wars, aided largely by the advent of the tank. There were no blitzkrieg-like movements from Western armies relying on infantry during the warfare of antiquity. The Byzantines and other military power of the East had plenty.

MILITARY LITERATURE

Some of the greatest generals in history have no monuments, but most of them have memoirs and writings. The *Strategika* provided the historical antecedent for this in the Western world. Not unlike the politicians of today, most generals write books or have them ghost written. These writings contribute to their prestige, as well as their notoriety and post-career income, and also provide a legacy and a body of professional work for modern officer corps to study. This Byzantine concept of military operations as an art and military education contributed to the development of future armies, most notably in the 17th and 18th centuries. These 200 years saw a boom in the establishment of military colleges and academies in Western countries—predecessors to RMA Sandhurst, the U.S. Military Academy, Virginia Military Institute, and École Polytechnique, to name a few. These and the study of military science are subsisted by a wellspring of military doctrines and memoirs. This body of work now includes other scholars and not simply generals and commanders. Indeed, some of the works from commanders are criticized for their narrow-mindedness and bias. This is a criticism shared with the works of the *Strategika*. This flaw is something that followed the practice of military commanders putting their thoughts and review of their actions to paper. Despite this, it is important to note that the large body of Western military writing is now required reading for most of the military officers of the world. Alongside their field manuals, it is not unusual to see the *Tactica of Leo VI*, Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, Rommel's *Infantry Attacks*, and Hamme's *Sling and the Stone* on the bookshelves and in the offices of military officers. The *Strategika* established the foundation for all of this.

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A final comparability in the *Strategika* and the rest of the Eastern writings is their age. The Byzantines among other non-Western powers of the time perfected making war an art. Unlike the barbarian tribes or the knights of Europe, the Byzantines believed that war demanded technical skill. You couldn't just be strong. Rank was not about birthright, legacy, or lineage. It was about training, discipline, and intellect. Therefore, so many Byzantine emperors rose through the ranks serving in the military first, sometimes beginning their careers in relative obscurity. The role of military tactician was valued by Byzantine society. It preserved the society and its established order.

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See also: *Individuals*: Maurice; *Military*: *Strategicon*; *Tactica* of Leo VI

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Strategos

The *strategoi* began as military commanders of the thematic armies but eventually served as military and political heads of the themes. Their evolution from field commander to essentially supreme commander of the themes was a hallmark in the militarization of the old Roman territories. This occurred for a variety of reasons. First, there was security. The empire was recovering from a period of decline. It would later consolidate power and reassert itself over the southern Balkans. Second, the strategoi's new power would marshal the means available in the themes to ease the burden of security on the central government.

Constantine V's (r. 780–797 CE) military reforms established the position of *strategos*. Its equivalent in the *tagmata* would be either the domestic or dungaree. From the mid-seventh century forward, the *magister militum* was referred to as or replaced by the rank. His reforms included many changes in title to the military ranks below *strategos* as well. This was in the mid-eighth century. Governing authority remained civilian and divided from that of the military.

The *strategos* had a very large staff. There were the *turmachs*, who led the soldiers who served under him. He had an adjutant, known as Count of the Tent. Another staff member, at the rank of domestic, managed the scouts, surveyors, and medical support assets. Also, on the staff were a *protocancellarius*, who maintained personnel with a group of clerks, and a *protomandator*, who directed the theme's heralds. The *strategos* also had a 100-man infantry guard called the *spatharii*.

The *strategos*'s primary responsibility was the arming and training of his army. This army comprised farmers who would serve when needed. They were a part-time force reminiscent of the reserves in most modern militaries. In addition to land forces, the head of naval forces from the appointed themes that had them, the *catepan*, also reported to the *strategos*.

The role of the *strategos* changed in the second half of the eighth century. Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) began replacing the civilian governors with the *strategos*, the military leaders. (They simply assumed control of civil matters as well.) The

emperor needed more reliable leaders in the distant areas of his empire. There were a few reasons for this. First, he needed more military-conscious leaders in these areas. He wanted to make military matters more of a priority. Next, Heraclius also wanted more concrete adherence to edicts from Constantinople. He was looking for tighter government control. Third, Heraclius wanted to prevent separatism and thematic governors from signing side deals with foreign forces and leaders, specifically Muslims. Heraclius hoped that by consolidating power in the *strategos*, he could preserve the empire's size and power.

The changes granted the *strategos* a great deal of power and made the position much more prestigious. His personal guard, the *spatharii*, was changed. His guard was into the *spatharii* and the *hetaeria*. These guard formations would slowly grow. The sizes of the thematic armies grew too. The *strategos* had the authority to conscript civilians. From the early seventh century to the mid-eighth century, *strategos*' forces grew from around 8,000 men to over 10,000. The changes consolidated power for the emperor and enabled *strategoi* to build larger armies.

The emergence of the *strategoi* as both civil and military leaders speaks to a larger phenomenon of the period. The conversion to the theme system and the elevation of the *strategoi* moved the burden of recruitment and compensation from the central government to the themes. Looking at the whole of Byzantine military history, large changes in structure are completed because of threat. It can be military, like a threat from opposing forces. It can be internal, like the dispensation of the Praetorian Guard and the establishment of the *Scholae Palatinae*. A threat just as dangerous is financial. This last threat is dealt with many ways throughout classical history. The Romans practiced salutary neglect (the practice of holding the enemy temporarily with weaker forces until reinforcements of the regular army arrive). Here, the Byzantines instituted the theme system. Harnessing the economic and human assets of the themes by a *strategos* with both civilian and military power was important to that end.

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See also: *Individuals*: Maurice; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; *Military*: *Scholae Palatinae*; *Tagmata*; Themes

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Sylloge Tacticorum

The *Sylloge Tacticorum*, meaning a "collection of tactics," is another renowned manuscript of the *Strategika*, the military writings of the Byzantine Empire. There were various prominent writings early in the empire's history, most being published up to around the 5th century. Following the *Strategicon* of Maurice, there is a void in the genre. There was a revival in the field in the 9th and 10th centuries known as the Macedonian renaissance. The *Sylloge* represents a benchmark in this renewed interest and practice of military writing in the empire. This was the impetus of the renaissance. It was less about the former Greek kingdom and more about the Hellenistic practice of preserving historical texts.

The authorship of the *Sylloge* is disputed and regarded as anonymously written. The exact date is unknown. It consists of 102 chapters. These chapters can be divided into three distinct sections. The first 56 chapters largely contain material taken from previous military works, specifically the *Tactica* and the *Strategicon*. These chapters discuss a variety of military subjects. These include the qualities needed in a general, formations in battle, conducting ambushes, espionage, and the conduct of siege warfare. The next two sections have newer concepts, directions, and ideas. The first, which encompasses chapters 57 to 75, is unique in that it discusses more unconventional tactics. Whereas the first 56 chapters reviewed much of what would be considered established doctrine, this group of chapters addresses what could be best described as early chemical warfare. The topics include the use of poisons and flammable weaponry. The third collection of chapters is predictable to students of the *Strategika*. It is a collection of rules of thumb and other specific battlefield advice. This is very similar to the second half of book VIII and book XI of the *Strategicon*, as well as constitution XX of the *Tactica*.

The *Sylloge* is important to the larger body of *Strategika* because it reveals three things. First, it illustrates the regard that the Byzantines had for military writers and strategists. They believed it was an art form. Second, the role of prior works in the *Sylloge* shows reverence to the military history of the empire. Third, it displays a very valuable trait in military thought: the ability to evolve. Many military powers throughout history lack a fundamental duality of being able to embrace both history and present threat. Many historians cite the persistence of the British cavalry and, later, their tactics at Gallipoli. Both were doomed by the innovation and widespread use of the machine gun. More contemporary analysts refer to the experiences of the United States in Vietnam or the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Armies cannot use established conventional tactics against an unconventional foe. The *Sylloge* contains what would be referred to as the greats of Byzantine military treatise, but new, necessary information is also contained in the second section. It suggests incorporating new ideas into established military thinking.

An example of this is the introduction of what is best described as combined arms tactics. It is the first text of the *Strategika* that prescribes the use of the square. This later served as a foundation for another well-known text, the *Praecepta Militaria*. The

infantry would form in a square. The cavalry would attack. If they were successful, the square would move in trace behind them, taking prisoners and caring for wounded. If unsuccessful, the cavalry would retreat into the square, between the ranks of the infantry. The infantry, led by the heavy infantry, the *scutari*, would hold the line while the cavalry regrouped. They could eventually counterattack, probably from the "wings."

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See also: *Individuals*: Maurice; *Military*: *Scutari*; *Stategicon*; *Strategika*; *Tactica* of Leo VI

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Tactica of Leo VI

The work is a military treatise written by or for Emperor Leo VI in the late 9th and early 10th centuries BC. It is intended to be a guidebook for military commanders. It is divided into 20 "constitutions." Each varies in length a great deal. Some are as short as two pages. Other constitutions are over 20 pages. The work is not unlike Maurice's *Strategicon* (which it refers to at some points). First, there is very little that is original in it. Second, scholars cannot be sure how much of the text was written by Leo. Third, there are several different copies available. Evidence points to something close to an original with 16 sections, a list of maxims, and an epilogue. After this are three additional sections. At some point, these sections were incorporated into the original structure and there was an attempt to renumber them.

The prologue of the *Tactica* begins with a sort of a prayer. It then dives into an extended soliloquy of how the Roman army has fallen by the wayside because of a neglect of discipline and knowledge. The author rededicates the reader and the

government's efforts into learning about the past. He admits that what is contained in the treatise is simply what "we have come across . . . gathered up and collected." This clearly proves that this was at least researched by more people than himself. He continues, declaring the importance that leaders study and practice tactics and strategy. He completes the first section of the *Tactica* by outlining the work by asking a series of rhetorical questions.

The first constitution of the manuscript is entitled "Preparation for War." It is rather short. It defines some basic terms that will be used in the remainder of the work: tactics, strategy, the general. One interesting aspect is the primacy given to land forces. He goes into some detail about them. He notably says he will discuss naval forces later. This is consistent with Maurice's treatment of naval warfare in the *Strategicon*. He finishes the first section by discussing the characteristics needed by a general. He delves into these qualifications and needed abilities at much greater length in the second constitution of the *Tactica*. The author stresses that the general should be "discreet in bodily matters and exercise self-control." This hints toward a certain kind of morality that is mentioned several times. Additionally, he demands that generals be "sober and vigilant."

The second constitution draws a picture of a general as an upstanding, moral, family man. (The author specifically states "they" prefer someone who is a father.) Leo then goes to great lengths to address nepotism and cronyism. He states that a man's ability should be the first priority in selecting a general. The wealthy should not be appointed without substantive military ability. Men from celebrated families or descended from "highly regarded ancestors" are to be judged on their own merits. He compares it to evaluating animals. The last few pages of the section address the general in the first person "you." He gives advice and direction about the general's love of God and treatment and appearance toward his troops: the importance of being evenhanded yet firm with rule-breakers and always seeming temperate and confident.

Constitutions III and IV both address preparations for war. Constitution III offers advice and instruction on commitment to a plan and how a plan is made. He urges leaders to get input from others. Choose trustworthy people with experience and allow debate, but make sure that the leader alone makes the final decision. Select good officers and good soldiers. Leo then delves into a very structured breakdown of each rank and reporting relationship down to the very last foot soldier. The leader carries the title of general. His immediate subordinate is his lieutenant general.

Constitution V addresses weapons. The general is to "see to it" himself; some by the subordinate officers. This might refer to purchasing or furnishing the weapons. This includes bows, arrows, quivers, different types of shields, and spears. Of course, daggers, axes, and swords are included as well. Next, the constitution describes the armor to be worn. Again, this is very reminiscent of the *Strategicon*. The soldiers and the horses are both to be armored. The constitution then addresses the flags, gear for making fortified camps (picks, shovels, etc.), and siege pieces. This includes *ballistai*, other artillery pieces, and ladders. The constitution concludes by mentioning the need for small canoes and boats that might be needed to cross water and that larger naval forces will require comparable weapons, specifically the ability to transport horses.

Constitution VI reverts to the subject of preparing for war. The author details the different required weapons for the cavalry and the infantry. Every man should have head-to-ankle chain mail armor, a helmet with crest, a bow and a quiver that holds no less than 30 arrows, swords, daggers, and lances. He explains that the nicer-looking the soldier's armor, the more confident he will be and the better he will fight. All Roman recruits under 40 are required to have bows, although Leo feels archery has been neglected. All cavalry men were required to have saddles, a bridle, and three days of rations. They were to carry a large ax as well. Leo then gives a short history of the different armaments used through the ages by different armies.

Constitution VII addresses training. Leo writes that even in times of peace, soldiers are to be drilled daily. It is important to keep them occupied and out of trouble. The heavy infantry were directed to fight one another. Light infantry were drilled in the rapid shooting of a bow. Cavalry drills were extensive as well, including rapidly shooting a bow in every direction while mounted. The soldiers were to be drilled as a unit to improve their reaction and discipline to orders given to them as a group. This is the forerunner of the close-order drill practiced in the military today. The author lends the final third of the section to timing instructions: when to form a phalanx or when to signal for the flanking units to encircle, for example. This long constitution devoted to training presents another strong historical antecedent to the *Strategicon*.

Constitution VIII deals with military punishments. It advises swift, but fair punishment. Several offenses require death, the "extreme penalty," including mutiny and treason. Desertion warrants a life sentence of duty within the garrison. Traitors and those with knowledge of intent are all to be put to death. These laws are to be made at the outset of any campaign. All punishments are to be public, in front of all mustered troops of the *tagmata*. While the constitution is short, and the laws are few, the justice prescribed in the *Tactica* was severe.

Constitution IX addressed marches. Leo tells leaders to keep their army separated while on the march, maintaining their intervals until attack is eminent. Reconnaissance and scouts were to be used in foreign lands. The general is to lead his army from the front. One interesting aspect of the section is the difference in the treatment of civilians in empire territory and foreign lands. The author forbids foraging or marching through crops, fields, and gardens in home territories. In enemy territory, however, Leo calls for a scorched-earth policy. Whatever the army does not use to survive in enemy territory should be destroyed. This is a very early example of the more modern military theory of total war.

The next two sections are two of the shortest. Constitution X discusses baggage trains. It resembles an abbreviated summary of book V of the *Strategicon*. Constitution XI gives detailed directions on establishing camps. The author warns not to camp for too long and be cautious of location. Health conditions and sanitation are prime concerns of this. Leo directs commanders to fortify their camps if attack is expected. The section details very specific dimensions and details of the organization of the camp. It establishes how many tents, and in how many rows and columns, are to be pitched. It lists who should sleep where. Again, like constitution IX, there is a mention of the respect for the rights of imperial citizens and merchants.

ARMOR

There were different varieties of armor available during antiquity. The forces of the Byzantine Empire were made up warriors from various economic classes. Some were full-time soldiers. Other men were farmer-soldiers and more like militias or National Guard troops. Thus, a fighter's income might determine his choice of armor. Chain mail provided the most mobility. This was made of small metal rings interloped. This armor was heavy and very expensive. This package was reserved for the better-paid troops or fighters from affluent families. Another type was scale mail armor. This armor joined small pieces of metal with leather or string on a backing of leather or cloth. It provided protection and some mobility. The third type of armor worn was referred to as lamellar. This was made of elongated metal plates tightly laced together. It provided very little flexibility but was strong and cheap. This reality differs from the army prescribed by Leo VI in his *Tactica*. Leo argued that the economic disparity in armor was to be subsidized by the commander. Thus, the fighting force would look better, feel better, and be more confident in battle. The specific mention of this hints to a known disparity in the armament of forces. In this regard, Leo's direction to commanders to see to the welfare of his troops is a profound statement that echoed down through the ages in other military writings.

William Eger

Constitution XII begins the true tactical directions and instruction of the *Tactica*. It discusses the order of battle and gives very detailed tactical directions and instructions. It prescribes the battle lines, timing of attacks, commitment of certain troops, and pursuit of the enemy. The author has clear and different instructions for the infantry and the cavalry. It is so detailed as to furnish the actual verbal commands to be given. This section concludes with a written question-and-answer section about tactics.

Constitution XIII is entitled "The Day before Battle." It presents military leaders with a prebattle checklist. Clergy bless the flags and standards of the armies. Leaders send out reconnaissance forces and spies. If a leader is facing a largely unknown force, Leo suggests small probing forces to perform hasty attacks to gain intelligence. He advises to send away any troublemakers or potential mutineers within the ranks of the army. Military leaders must remember to consult with their junior officers and lieutenants and establish signals and other elements of command and control. Give morale-boosting speeches. Most of all, generals should not engage the enemy on unfavorable terrain or at inopportune times. Fight the enemy when and where it benefits Byzantine forces.

Constitution XIV sets forth the instructions for the day of battle. It includes a lot of advice dealing with tactics and terrain. The beginning of the section deals with administration and terrain. Leo writes that the day of battle, the general should not do much. His first responsibility is to be a visible, confident leader. The section emphasizes the use of terrain to conceal an army's strength and aid it in battle. The second half of the section discusses tactics. It warns generals not to overpursue retreating

troops, warning of traps and ambushes. It warns not to counterattack in the event of a decisive loss. Yet, most of all, it reminds the general that the goal is not to defeat the opponent, but to destroy it.

The next section deals exclusively with siege warfare. Generals should assemble a fortified line around the city. Scouts are to be sent toward the city to prevent breakthroughs and find people deserting the besieged city. Guards should be posted at the gates of the city. When people are caught leaving the city, women, children, and the infirmed should be returned. Leo warns generals to remember that you can be seen. Along this mind-set, he encourages night operations because city inhabitants cannot see at night. This is a terrifying prospect for them. The most impressive troops should be visible in full armor to intimidate the besieged. If the city cannot be starved out, generals can resort to offensive siege tactics. This includes artillery pieces: *alakatia*, *tetrareai*, etc. Fortresses with interior buildings made of wood are susceptible to fire. This includes flaming arrows and inflammable projectiles. The author also encourages excavation and tunneling under the walls of the fortified city.

The consolidation of the battlefield and after the war is provided for in constitution XVI. This section is very similar to constitution XIII. This part of the manuscript presents the general with a checklist for the time after the war. Generals are expected to pray and thank God for their good fortunes on the battlefield. Then, leaders should honor heroes, recognize their best warriors, and hold banquets and celebrations. Of course, those who failed to do their part or showed dishonor are punished as well. Captives are to be sold or exchanged. The dead need proper burials. Generals should honor any truce or treaty if they are made. However, Leo cautions that this might be a dangerous trap. Retain security. He directs leaders to remain vigilant of attacks.

Three of the four final constitutions are self-explanatory. Constitution XVII is entitled surprise attacks. Constitution XVIII is a chronicle of the practices of other various peoples of the time, similar to book XI of the *Strategicon*. Constitution XX is a collection of maxims, similar to the last part of book VIII of the *Strategicon*. Constitution XIX is an early treatise on naval tactics. Leo notes in the introduction to the section that little has been written about naval warfare. This might be true, but this could obviously be disputed. Yet, this presumption is hard to argue when there is not a single date of authorship of the *Tactica*. Regardless, the section sets forth some interesting information about navies and naval warfare of the time. It warns against overburdening *dromones*. These ships were known for their speed. It establishes the number of men for each *dromon* and also acknowledges that there were a variety of sizes of the ship's class. It also establishes different methods of training the *dromones*' crews at sea.

One timeless aspect of the *Tactica* is the deference and reverence offered to military thought of the past. This was a characteristic of the Byzantines. They held "the ancients" in high regard. Yet, this is something that continues to this day in most every military academy, basic military training, or formal military education. Military academies teach the tactics of 19th-century warfare. Armored infantry and tank units study Patton and Rommel in the desert. Students study Romans, Persians, and Greeks in pursuit of undergraduate and graduate degrees in military history. Some critics cite this as "fighting the last war," yet it is also understanding what happened and why.

Military planners use this historical information because in many cases it is the best indicator of what they might face next. This would have earned works like *Strategicon* and *Tactica* great value. While the practice might not earn high marks for the Pentagon or MI5 today, the Byzantines were faced with a different situation. They fought many of the same tribes and foes over and over again. Establishing a pattern in the strategic culture and tactics of their enemies made sense. This was especially true in the time period of Leo, who faced reasserting the Byzantine power into regions formerly lost. In this regard, the *Tactica* achieves two things: it established a good practice for military leaders for thousands of years to come and also prepared contemporary Byzantine armies for the most common foes on the battlefield.

William Eger

See also: *Organization* and *Administration:* Law; *Military*: *Dromon*; *Strategicon*; *Tagmata*; *Primary Documents*: Document 20

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Tagmata

The *tagma* were full-time regionally recruited special professional regiments under the direct control of the emperor. Collectively, *tagma* units were referred to as the "*tagmata*." Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE) created the first of these units in the 700s CE. It was the first step in Constantine's reforms of the army. Constantine started the reforms in reaction to an attempted coup by one of Constantine's in-laws. Upon the death of Leo III in 741 CE, his son-in-law, Artabasdos, made a claim to the throne using a local army from Opsikon. Constantine used the themes from Thrakesion and Anatolikon to defeat Artabasdos at the Battle of Sardis. Constantine made changes to the military structure. He concentrated power back to the throne. He created military units loyal to the emperor and following his direct command in hope of preventing future threats to his reign. These units, referred to as *tagma*, were named the *tagmata*. The first of these units were *Scholae* and the *Excubitores*. These were older units that had taken on mostly ceremonial duties. Constantine revived these units. Two more *tagma* units were added: the Arithmos and the Hikanatoi.

These forces remained near the emperor as opposed to the thematic units or *limitanei*, which remained in the border areas of the empire. *Tagma* units were better disciplined and better paid than other units. They also represent the first step toward true mercenary units in the Byzantine army, as they were made of both foreign and

indigenous fighters. These units were very important in the 9th and 10th centuries as the Byzantine Empire reasserted its power in the East. These units evolved in size over time. The *tagma* initially was made of only 1,000–1,500 troops. In the mid-eighth century, these units were as large as only a battalion. They grew into a whole field division. By the mid-tenth century, some *tagma* units were as large as 6,000 men.

It is important not to make generalizations about military troops of the late Byzantine Empire. Several authors dispute the true number of *tagma* units and size of the *tagmata*. Most texts are not very exact in differentiating the types of units in the army. *Tagma*, *taxeis*, *strata, stratavmata*, and *stratopeda* all served as units within the army. Yet, some of the texts used to study the army in the period are haphazard in differentiating them. Some attempt to discern the *tagma* simply by their horses. For this, it is possible that the labels for army units are interchangeable. The naming of units in modern scholarly works is not entirely haphazard, although a large number use the terms "*tagma*" and "*taxis*" interchangeably.

The narrative of the origins of the *tagmata* support the claim by many that Constantine's changes to the Byzantine military sought to buttress his rule and prolong his reign. Some historians allege that the changes sacrificed the Byzantine Empire for Constantine's reign. There is validity in this theory. However, the structure established by Constantine was not that different from the structure established by the leaders of ancient China. The more defensive strategy that uses fortifications or vast expanses of land area is patently non-Western. This emphasizes the importance of the debate over the "Europeaness" of the eastern empire and its formidable neighbor, Russia.

William Eger

See also: *Individual*: Constantine the Great; Leo III, the Isaurian; *Military*: Excubitors; *Limitanei*; Themes

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Themes

The word "themes" holds a dual purpose. It is a reference to the government system of the late Byzantine Empire as well as the provincial military units that defended them. The theme system developed after the defeat of Justin II at the hands of the Lombards in Italy, Slavic migration into the Balkans, and Arab attacks into the Byzantine lands of Asia Minor in the late sixth century. It allowed Byzantine leaders to

reset their approach and structure of government. With the Byzantine lands at an almost low point, it allowed for a consolidation of power using the heart of the empire as its base. It later spread into the Balkans, starting with the establishment of a theme based in Thrace in 680 CE and in Greece between 687 and 695 CE. By 850 CE, all of Greece, Asia Minor, and the coastal areas were all within the new system.

The implementation of the system began as a military operation. Imperial armies were drawn back into the interior of Asia Minor to defend against the marauding Arab armies. Emperor Heraclius established themes of Anatolikon and Armeniakon. These armies were reassigned from the respective *magister militums* (older military commands). Themes of Thrakseion, or Thrace, followed. This was a part of the contingent removed from the area now occupied by Slavs and reassigned to Asia Minor. The final of the first four, Opiskion, was made of a patchwork of imperial guard and central army units. They were stationed close to Constantinople. These names are important reference points, but they were also recycled by later emperors because of their prestige and legacy.

Each theme was commanded by a *strategos*, singular of strategoi. They were divided into *tourmai* (divisions), *drouggoi* (brigades), and, later, *bandas* (regiments). The *tourmai* and the *banda* were groups within the theme. The *bandas* identified with their region of recruitment. The *tourmai* were stationed at fortified bases or cities and led by a *tourmarch*. This was a commander of some considerable authority and power. He was responsible for regional security. Later, *drouggoi* that numbered around 1,000 men were replaced with 200-man *bandas*. Smaller units allowed for more of them to be created. Not all conquered territories could provide 1,000 men, nor were they necessary. This allowed for increasing the size of the army as the Byzantine leaders reasserted their power.

The themes served to buttress Byzantine military power in several ways. First, they were relatively cheap. The soldiers armed themselves and had their own horses. Most only wanted and received small plots of land to farm on. Additionally, they were cheaper than foreign mercenaries. Next, many of these soldiers were from nomadic tribes of the steppe. They were superior horsemen fighting for their own land. This esprit de corps is important. Some historians, most from the early 20th century, argue that the themes were inferior fighters. This has largely been relegated as a dubious notion. Eventually, the themes became militarized provinces. Early on, the *strategos* was simply a military commander who worked with a civilian leader. After around 750 CE, the *strategos* controlled the civilian administration as well. This centralized power for Constantinople. They used the new more numerous themes to control both military and civilian power through the theme system.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Maurice; *Military*: *Strategos*; *Tagmata*

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Tribune

In the context of the Byzantine military, a tribune was a military commander. The troop size of a tribune's command changed over time. This is not to be confused with the tribunes of the Roman Empire. There were tribunes in the Roman Empire who were political figures and completely different tribunes who were military figures. Researching the role of the tribune within the Byzantine forces can be just as confusing. Like many other titles and terms, it changed over time. For the Byzantine tribune, the period of flux was the fourth and fifth centuries. A good source for this is Maurice's (582–602 CE) *Strategicon*.

The concepts surrounding the tribune set forth in the *Strategicon* came from Maurice's consultations with Emperor Tiberius II Constantine (r. 574–582 CE). The emperor changed the organization of the army after succeeding Justin II (r. 565–574 CE) to the throne. They were included in the *Strategicon*, which was published during Tiberius II Constantine's reign around 579 CE. Before the changes cited in the *Strategicon*, tribunes commanded 6,000 men. Maurice's *Strategicon* identifies that tribunes commanded *tagmas* or *bandons*. These are referred to by some as *numeri*. These were forces of between 200 and 400 men.

Reporting to the tribune were *hekatontarchs*, who commanded a hundred men each. The tribune's second in command was the highest-ranking *hekatontarch*, known as an *ilarch*. The tribune's force became the basic unit for the Byzantine army. It was made up of both cavalry and infantry. Its primary effective fighting force was heavy cavalry. Five to eight *banda*, or *numeri* made a *turma* or *moirai*. Maurice directed leaders to vary the number in each for tactical reasons. In turn, three *moiras* made a *meros*. A *meros* had approximately 6,000 men. However, nowhere is the number exact, and in Maurice's mind it shouldn't have been. Again, this was part of deceiving the enemy. No good practice allowed for informing the opponent of troop strength.

Researchers need context for a firm understanding of a tribune's role in a specific period of Byzantine military history. The term "tribune" dates at least as far back as Justinian (r. 527–565 CE). As the military structure changed repeatedly, the tribune's role underwent alterations. This is not unusual in the field. A scholar pursuing the true meaning of the term "*numeri*" shares a common experience in this regard. Scholars going back as far as the turn of the century concluded that the rank of tribune was somewhat generic. It was a widely used term that referred to different ranks in Byzantine military history. It was commonly used to refer to commanding officers in a general sense. The only way to understand the role of a tribune at a specific time is to understand the prevailing contemporary military structure.

William Eger

See also: *Individuals*: Justinian; Maurice; *Military*: *Noumeroi*; *Strategicon*

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Varangian Guard

The story of the Varangian Guard is one of the most important in world history. First, their role in Russian history cannot be overstated. Second, their story is roughly the history of the late Byzantine Empire. Their establishment, history, and eventual demise illustrate a world history timeline that starts in the late 10th century and leads to the end of the Middle Ages. It touches some of the most important events in human history: the establishment of the Russian state and its nature, the beginning of the British monarchy, as well as Arab domination of the Middle East, all of which continue to this day.

The establishment of the Varangian Guard began out of the desperation of Byzantine Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE). Thematic rebellions racked his reign. Leery of military leaders within the empire, he sought foreign allies to put down the revolts and insurrections. Keeping this in mind, it is important to note that the Byzantine Empire and the Rus' Kingdom of Kiev enjoyed a series of treaties and relative peace in the 10th century. The two promised mutual military aid if needed. Thus, when Basil needed assistance, he reached out to Kiev's Vladimir I and the agreement they made would change the world forever.

Vladimir agreed to assist Basil in suppressing a series of revolts, most notably in Phocas. Vladimir sent 6,000 troops, most of Norse background, from parts of his realm that is modern-day Scandinavia. The rebellion ended with the Battle of Abydus on April 13, 989 CE. Vladimir's aid was not without a price. Vladimir demanded the hand of Basil's younger sister in marriage in exchange for the troops Basil needed. In negotiating the terms of the union, Vladimir promised that he and his subjects would convert to Christianity. Vladimir used Byzantine religious specialists to convert his subjects to their new religion and adapt Rus' society to its new religion, what today is known as Eastern Orthodox. The academic consensus is that modern Russia was made possible by the Byzantine Empire and this union.

The Varangian Guard enabled Basil to consolidate power. He had won without the material and political support from military leaders within the empire. The

Image of the emperor Theophilus surrounded by his personal military escorts, the Varangian Guard. They were the Byzantine successors of the Praetorian Guard and wore distinctive military uniforms identifying them as Franks, English, Russians, and Vikings. They are described by many Byzantine chronicles and histories and played a major role in bravely defending the city of Constantinople before its fall to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. (Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

Varangian Guard answered to him directly. They replaced the *excubitores* as his personal bodyguards. There were also Varangian Guard units outside Constantinople. This created the distinction of "Varangian inside the city" and "Varangian outside of the city." These forces would join other foreign forces at a very important time in Byzantine military history. Basil established the guard during the period known as the "reconquest" of the empire, which occurred from 956 to 1025 CE.

During this period, Byzantine rulers needed large numbers of recruits, and this changed the fabric of the army. By the 11th century, the Byzantine forces were a combination of mercenary units, established thematic units, and allied armies. It was no longer really "Byzantine" according to most scholars. It was following this period that the Varangian Guard underwent it first large change. The guard in its inception was largely Norse, meaning the recruits came from Scandinavia. The Battle of Hastings in 1066 created a new recruiting pool for the guard. Over time, the guard was filled with more Anglo-Saxon and fewer Norse recruits. There are two theories behind this. Most historians attribute the influx of Englishmen to Anglo-Saxons leaving their country in disgust. There is a small faction that refers to some instances of Norse Varangian Guard mutinies.

VLADIMIR I AND CHRISTIANITY

The baptism of the Rus' people to Eastern Christianity and the implications for the modern world are undisputable. There are other historical narratives behind Vladimir's decision to embrace Eastern Christianity. First, there were some domestic implications. The varangians who helped Vladimir seize power from his brother lingered in Kiev and were causing political problems. Sending these forces to aid the Byzantines provided a solution caused by the idle yet brutal hands of these forces. Second, European peoples had started adopting Christianity. Doing the same would raise the profile and political regard for the prince among nobles there. Finally, there is much to be said of the interconnection of politics and the Orthodox religion. It codified the notion of divine right and solidified his power. These three factors contributed to his decision regardless of the narrative given about the turn of events involving his actual conversion. This set a large part of the world firmly within the sphere of Eastern Orthodox and Russian influence. Russia's defense of its Orthodox counterpart Serbia served to start World War I. This influence existed in perpetuity throughout the Warring Period of the 20th century and the Cold War. It exists still today as Putinist Russia attempts to retain a role in the domestic politics of Orthodox states of central and Eastern Europe.

William Eger

The Varangian Guard's battle history is extensive. They were active in most of the military engagements of the late empire. They always accompanied the emperor when he took the field. They served in many capacities. Some historical accounts note Varangian on foot as infantry. A large body of study records them as a formidable naval force. This notes that some of the Varangian were descended from pirates. The guard even played a role in one coup d'état. In this isolated instance, the "Varangian outside the city" and the "Varangian inside the city" fought each other. Their military exploits continued until the 13th century. There is little heard about them in written histories after the sack of Constantinople in 1204, and there is no mention of them in Islamic accounts of the final siege of Constantinople in 1453. Many think the units came to an end around the time of the former.

William Eger

See also: *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Fourth Crusade; *Military*: Excubitors

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Vexallationes

Vexillationes, plural for *vexillatio*, referred to a military detachment. These units were used for special military tasks or missions. They were of no specific type of unit. Units could be infantry, cavalry, or marine. The detachments were very important in the Roman military organization from the reign of Augustus (r. 31 BCE–14 CE) to the reign of Septimus Severus (r. 193–211 CE). They played a large role in the Roman military crisis of the second century. These would be somewhat neglected through the reigns of Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180 CE) and Commodus (r. 180–192 CE). Severus's military reforms provided a permanent solution to the crisis.

Vexillationes were detachments of larger legions that could be pulled from their home units and returned when they completed their missions. Generals and emperors gave *vexillationes* any of a variety of missions. They could be sent to a specific region of the empire to buttress its defenses. *Vexillationes* might join larger military campaigns or expeditions outside the empire. Centurion commanders of the detachments enjoyed a great deal of independence in the field. Their missions might take years. In many instances, their only obligation was to their assigned mission. Some historians refer to *vexillationes* as unit of lower status because of their size and somewhat temporary nature. In the later empire, some refer to the units serving in the imperial palace as *vexillationes palatinae*.

The *vexillationes* served an important role from the inception of the Roman military plan. The plan from the time of Augustus was predominantly defensive. There were campaigns, wars, and offensive operations, but the plan prioritized preservation of the empire, especially the city of Rome. This plan remained basically unchanged from the reign of Augustus to the time of Hadrian, around 31 BCE to the second century CE. The emperor would use the *vexillationes* to buttress defenses of the empire. He shifted detachments of larger forces to trouble spots on the border. This long-standing policy was successful for well over a century but eventually faced a crisis.

R. E. Smith chronicles this crisis in detail. The number of available recruits and size of the army dwindled over time, which made the former policy of the Roman military unsustainable. The reasons were few but great in effect. Each factor compounded the last and created a downward spiral in terms of military manpower. First, returning Roman forces brought back the Antonine plague (during the time of Antoninus Pius (r. 135–161 CE) from the Far East in the middle second century. It killed millions and left the army in tatters. Second, aside from the plague, recruiting could not keep up with the normal death rate of the regular Roman soldier. Finally, recruiting proved more difficult than before.

Dealing with this crisis first fell to Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180 CE). He faced a constant and very lengthy threat from the north. He found himself shifting more and more *vexillationes* and legions from elsewhere in the empire. This left their home areas susceptible to attack. As he pulled troops to the north, these other areas became immediate targets. Marcus Aurelius raised two more legions to add to the Roman army. This worked for a short time. Unfortunately, Marcus Aurelius died. Some say

Marcus Aurelius fell to the Antonine plague. His successor, Commodus (r. 180–192 CE), inexplicably ignored the subdued crisis and abandoned any plans for increasing the size of the army. This task would ultimately fall to Severus.

The two contributing factors of the crisis remained despite the temporary respite Marcus Aurelius's two additional legions granted. Severus reinitiated the expansion of the army and continued adding legions to the army. Finding new recruits remained elusive. This was due in great part to the tradition of rewarding citizenship to non-Romans who served and their families. This was prized by many foreigners living within the empire. Over time, this practice made the sons of non-Romans serving in the army citizens and sacrificed the main recruiting tool for the government in Rome. This was most certainly obvious because the policy was curtailed to include only the veteran himself, but not his children in 140 CE. Severus saw that this policy would take time to work and went about making reforms to make being a soldier more appealing in other ways. Specifically, he permitted soldiers to be married while serving. He gave a very generous pay increase to his military. Rome inadequately paid their soldiers based on a scale set 110 years before. He also changed advancement policies, which favored elite units like the Praetorians over foot soldiers in the past.

William Eger

See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Praetorian Guard

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Objects and Artifacts

OVERVIEW ESSAY

The inclusion of material culture in historical surveys has gained in popularity as scholars have sought to blend multiple disciplines to come closer to complete portraits of their subjects. The entries in this section all focus on one object, or collection of objects, and what they can communicate about the Byzantine Empire. A wide variety of objects are covered here—the high art and the everyday, the holy and the secular, the mythical and the digitized. Each object carries its unique story, but at the same time there is plenty of overlap. By bringing these objects together, a handful of historical trends and connections emerge. Together, the objects chosen for this publication tell the story of the Byzantine Empire and its personalities, faith, rise, and fall.

One of the dominant trends was the relationship between religion and imperial power. Although the Eastern church was dominated by patriarchs, the Byzantine emperor chose who held that office. Separation between the two offices was an illusion that was often torn apart. At the same time, emperors often used Christianity to justify their power and influence their subjects, and much of their authority derived from the belief that they ruled with God's blessing. We see this in the ways that several of these objects were honored and used. The Image of Camuliana and the Mandylion of Edessa, miraculous icons imbued with the power to ward off evil, were brought out against the enemies of the empire. The emperor depicted on Barberini ivory is shown as the ruler of the world, but only by the grace of God. The Nerezi murals and the mosaics of Hagia Sophia were commissioned by the highest in society to demonstrate their power, but also served as acts of devotion. Through these objects, we see that religion and imperial power were inseparable in Byzantine society.

While the Byzantine Empire was a Christian state, its people did not forget their roots. Today we study the empire as a unique entity, but it is important to remember that the Byzantines saw themselves as heirs to Rome. As the West dissolved into smaller kingdoms, the East lived on for another millennium. The creators of many of these objects chose older styles and symbolism, and they adapted them. The David Plates connect the imperial office to the Israelite king, while the Missorium of Theodosius I and the Veroli casket feature pagan mythology. To solidify the importance of Constantinople in the Eastern Empire, Theodosius's obelisk was brought from Egypt and placed in the Hippodrome. On a more practical level, the gold solidi of Justinian were part of a monetary system that had its roots in the early Roman Empire, and an old Roman road map was used to lay out the mosaic map at Madaba. Taken together,

these objects show that the Byzantines remained connected to their past, but also that they could manipulate this past for their own purposes.

Some objects, while important to the Byzantines, had their powers magnified by outside influences. The Crusaders, arriving from Western Europe to free the Holy Land, took it upon themselves to find as many Christian relics as possible. This was done to glorify God and earn divine support for their mission, but these objects also became symbols to rally around. The discoveries of the Holy Lance and the True Cross, even when in pieces, motivated generations of Europeans to take up the cross. These objects, along with others like the Hodegetria icon, were just some of the many objects and ideas brought back to Europe, and they continued to influence European politics, religion, and art up to the Renaissance. When Constantinople fell in 1453, this dissemination helped the Byzantine Empire to live on in other forms.

Finally, some of these objects carry more importance now than they did in their own times. That desire for art and artifacts from the East, which first picked up steam during the Crusades, experienced a revival in the 19th and 20th centuries. European travelers came to the Holy Land in search of lost or forgotten treasures, often bringing them home with or without the consent of their caretakers. The chalice of Antioch, a relatively benign object found at the beginning of the 20th century, earned its fame as the legendary Holy Grail. In the 19th century, studies of the Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus rewrote the history of the Bible and contributed to the ongoing mission to recreate an "authentic" copy. The Crown of Aleppo, another manuscript, became entangled in the formation of modern-day Israel, as the Israeli and Aleppan Jewish communities argued over ownership and the right to their heritage. Byzantine material culture inspired new ideas and understandings, long after the empire ended.

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Antioch Chalice

Around 1910, workers digging a well in Antioch, Syria, uncovered a small treasure of silver objects. They were purchased by two of the Kouchakji brothers, members of a well-known family that dealt in antiquities. One of these objects was a chalice, consisting of three pieces: an inner and outer cup, and a base. The outer cup was

decorated with animals, rosettes, vines, and—most important—two separate depictions of Jesus Christ surrounded by five disciples, for a total of 12 figures. The renowned scholar Gustavus Eisen wrote the first study of the chalice in 1916, and he dated it to the first century. He went even further, arguing that the inner cup was, in fact, the cup that Jesus had used at the Last Supper—the Holy Grail. The outer cup had been created later to protect and honor this sacred relic. It was the discovery of the century, discussed by art historians and theologians alike. The chalice was found in generally good condition, considering how long it may have been left in the ground, although it had been slightly flattened. Restoration work was carried out by Léon André in 1913. The Kouchakji brothers had originally sought to sell the chalice to J. P. Morgan in the same year, but Morgan passed away before that could happen. For many years, it was exhibited around the world, including the Chicago World's Fair (1933–1934). In 1950, the chalice was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where it remains to this day.

This is the popular account of the discovery of the Antioch Chalice, arguably one of the most discussed and debated objects of the 20th century. In fact, the modern history of the Antioch Chalice could be considered a documented case of how an object gains the status of a relic. Many of the details have been called into question in the decades since it was found. Today, there is little about this story that scholars would argue is factual, from the circumstances of its discovery to the use of the object itself.

The first detail to fall was its identification as the Holy Grail. The Antioch Chalice became caught up in a broader academic debate over whether the East or West was more important to the development of Christian art. Those on the side of the East were more likely to defend Eisen's date, because it supported the existence of an Antiochine, or Syrian, style. Immediately after Eisen's first publication, other scholars began

The Antioch Chalice is a sixth-century vessel made of gilt silver. The cup portion depicts Jesus twice, along with other figures identified as either the apostles or classical philosophers. Discovered during an excavation in Syria in 1910, it was initially displayed as the cup that Jesus used during the Last Supper. However, it has more recently been identified as an oil lamp. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/The Cloisters Collection, 1950)

challenging his dating, which rested largely on assumptions about the shape and design elements. The inner cup was judged to be older simply because of its condition. Eisen had compared the chalice to the first-century Augustus cup, but objects from the fourth and fifth centuries have far more in common with it. Eisen addressed some of these challenges in later publications, but he never wavered on his claims. Today, the consensus is that the chalice was made in the sixth century CE, including the inner cup.

The rebuttals to Eisen's first publication challenged the dating of the Antioch Chalice, but scholars generally did not question its authenticity. That changed in 1925, when C. R. Morey argued that the chalice was a counterfeit, based on what he perceived to be a mix of different art styles. Others picked up on the same theory, but it has been discredited for the same reasons: close similarities to other objects from antiquity. The chalice's authenticity was confirmed in a more scientific study in 1941, when Princeton University's E. R. Caley carried out chemical tests. Caley determined that the degree of damage to the chalice was consistent with being underground for a long period of time.

The Antioch Chalice may not even be a chalice at all. Even accounting for a later date, it looks nothing like other chalices from the same period. More recently, it has been identified as a standing lamp. Similarly, the figures on the chalice may have been inspired by the story of the Seven Sages, a group of pagan philosophers. This story became more culturally relevant in the fifth century, when it was believed that those philosophers had foreseen the coming of Christ. There are two possibilities for the figures on the chalice. Either they are the Apostles depicted in a way that recalls the pagan tradition, or they are the philosophers instead.

Eisen's original account of the Antioch Chalice's discovery cannot be confirmed, either. First, it is important to note that even in his version of the story, the silver treasure was not found during a formal archaeological investigation, even by

BYZANTINE SILVER

Silver played a unique role in Byzantine material culture as it was the most precious metal right after gold. In the sixth century, Byzantine silver coins were quite rare. That did not mean the metal was no longer considered valuable. Instead, it was used for various objects that tended to serve as gifts of patronage. Many of these silver objects, including the famous Antioch Chalice, were given to churches as well as important secular figures. Silver was prized in both the secular and domestic realms. Aristocratic homes had silver dining ware. Silver became a symbol of personal wealth, and it was put on display. In churches, silver was used for crosses or liturgical vessels such as the chalices and patens required for every Eucharist. Silver items were also regularly controlled and stamped, sometimes up to five times on a single piece. These objects were sometimes marked with their manufacturing dates and the names of associated persons. Many such pieces are dated between the fourth and eighth centuries. During the reign of Emperor Heraclius (610–641 CE), the production of silverware ended, which coincided with the state confiscating valuable metals to help refill the treasury during the Persian War.

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contemporary standards. There is no documentation of exactly where or how the chalice was uncovered. Second, Eisen altered some details in later publications, casting doubt on whether any of it was true. Others are on the record as stating that the chalice and the other objects found with it were dug up elsewhere. It is also possible that the treasure of Antioch is connected to other collections that were found in 1908–1910 and from the same area (at Stuma, Riha, and Hama, all in Syria). If so, the chalice may have been kept at the Church of Saint Sergius, in Kaper Koraon.

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See also: *Individuals*: Theodosius II; *Objects and Artifacts*: David Plates; Missorium of Theodosius I; *Key Places*: Antioch

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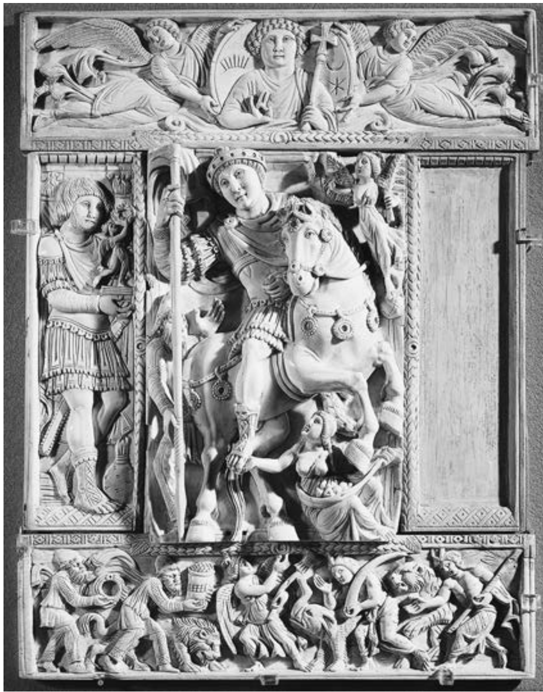
Barberini Ivory

A hallmark of early Byzantine art is the blending of Christian and pagan symbolism. Although Christianity was the state religion, artists continued to be inspired by the imperial imagery of the Roman Empire, even when that imagery included deities from Greco-Roman mythology. One example of this mix of Christianity and paganism is the Barberini ivory, a sixth-century ivory diptych now at the Louvre in Paris. The Barberini ivory is believed to be the remaining half of a Byzantine imperial *diptych*, an object consisting of two panels connected by a hinge. If the identification is correct, it is the only surviving example.

One of the Barberini ivory's five panels has been lost, and there is also minor damage to the central panel and on the edges. Otherwise, it is in good condition. The object was made in Constantinople, a conclusion based on the style and subject matter of its panels, which are kept in place by a tongue-and-groove technique. Its identification as a diptych is generally accepted, although it is still unclear exactly what the ivory was used for. Such diptychs became popular in the fifth century and were often used for book binding or given as gifts, and the subject matter—an imperial triumph—suggests



The Barbarini ivory depicts a triumphant emperor, possibly Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), blessed by Christ and accompanied by a winged victory. The emperor's foot is held by an allegory of Earth, and he rides above his subjects who peacefully present offerings, including agricultural and animal products. (DeAgostini/Getty Images)

that it was commissioned by the emperor, making it an object of high status. The style of the ivory's carving has been compared to panels on the Throne of Maximian in Ravenna, made during the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE). The ivory was likely made in the same period. Like the Throne of Maximian, the Barberini ivory is representative of the art produced during Justinian's time on the throne, particularly the recalling of Greco-Roman art and the communication between the panels.

That communication comes through in a description of the panels. The top panel, the only one to reference Christianity, features a bust of Christ and two angels flying on each side. He holds a cross and scepter in one hand and offers a blessing with the other. A disc behind his head holds the sun, moon, and stars. Communicating a connection between divine and secular authority, Christ blesses the emperor in the center panel. Unidentified on the ivory, a ruler of the Byzantine Empire rides a horse and points a spear downward. Behind the spear is a barbarian, whose clothes suggest that he is either Persian or Scythian. He raises one hand in defeat. Under the emperor and horse is a female figure identified as Terra, the pagan personification of Earth. A winged Victory hovers in the upper corner. One of her arms is missing, and it probably held out a crown for the emperor to take. In the side panel, a military officer holds a statue, another Victory. The other side panel, now gone, likely had a similar scene. The bottom panel has another Victory figure in the center, and she is joined by barbarians offering exotic animals as tribute. All figures are shown offering something, or themselves, in submission to the emperor. The emperor, in turn, receives everything according to Christ's blessing.

Although the center panel of the Barberini ivory clearly suggests a military triumph, sixth-century depictions were no longer linked to specific victories. This makes it difficult to determine the identity of the emperor in the center panel. The figure is comparable to depictions of Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE), but his likeness may have been used to invoke his legacy. The emperor Anastasius (r. 491–518 CE) has also been

BRUNHILD OF AUSTRASIA

The list of Austrasian elites on the back of the Barberini ivory all have one thing in common: they were related to Queen Brunhild, who married King Sigebert of Austrasia (in Hispania, comprising parts of the territory of present-day eastern France, western Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) in 567 CE. Brunhild was a daughter of King Athanagild, a Visigoth. She became Sigebert's only wife, a rarity among Merovingian kings. She converted from Arianism to Catholicism for the marriage, and in her role as queen she was an avid patron of the church. She was also politically active. When her son, Childebert II, took the throne in 575 CE, she continued to hold power. She restructured the royal army; reorganized the royal finances; supported construction of fortresses, churches, and abbeys; and repaired the old Roman roads. Sigebert and Brunhild supported Gregory of Tours; in return, Gregory preserved her reputation in his *History of the Franks*. He praised her for her political wisdom and personal morality. Later authors depicted her more harshly. She was later accused of regicide and executed by being dragged behind a horse. Her ashes are placed in a mausoleum constructed near the abbey of Saint Martin at Autun, which she had founded.

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suggested. However, it is believed more likely that Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) himself is the correct choice. He was shown in a similar pose on the equestrian statue in Constantinople. One possibility is that the ivory could be connected to a truce with the Persian Empire in 532 CE.

Just as the function of the Barberini ivory is unknown, there is no evidence of who possessed it initially. The first concrete documentation of ownership begins again in 1623, when it was given to Cardinal Legate Francesco Barberini in Aix-en-Provence. Cardinal Barberini's ownership gave the diptych its current name. The fifth panel had already been lost by this time. In 1899, Cardinal Barberini's treasures were put up for auction. The ivory was bought by the Louvre, which has owned it ever since.

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See also: *Individuals*: Justinian; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with; *Objects and Artifacts*: Equestrian Statue of Justinian I

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Cappadocian Image of Camuliana

In the early centuries of Eastern Christianity, some of the most popular forms of icons were images of Jesus Christ. One of these, the Image of Camuliana, earned the title of *acheiropoieton*, "not made by human hands." It was also a palladium, an object believed to protect cities from all sorts of dangers, but especially military threats (such as the palladium of Athena at Troy, mentioned by Homer in the Iliad).

The Image of Camuliana is first mentioned in 569 CE, in a copy of an earlier text by Zacharias Rhetor of Mytilene, a fifth-century bishop. According to this text, a woman in Camuliana asked how she could be a follower of Jesus Christ without seeing him. In response, a linen cloth bearing his image appeared in her fountain. Despite being submerged in the water, it was completely dry when she took it out. She hid it in her veil and took it to her teacher. When she showed him the cloth, she found that it had made an exact copy of the image on her veil. One of the images was taken to Caesarea. The other remained in Camuliana, in a temple built for it by Hypatia. The beginning of the account has been lost, but Hypatia may be the woman who received the original image. Because of this miracle, she converted to Christianity.

A later version, attributed to Gregory of Nyssa but dated to the seventh century, says that Jesus was seen creating the image himself by placing the cloth on his face. A lamp was placed in front of this cloth, and it was hidden away for a century. When Gregory found it, the lamp still burned. He had the cloth moved to Caesarea.

The Camuliana was carried to cities throughout Asia Minor to raise recovery funds for the village of Diyabudin (possibly Dioboulion), which was destroyed in a barbarian raid in 554 CE. The procession lasted until 560 CE, according to the text. The author also claimed that the procession symbolized the return of Christ, an event that, at the time, was thought to be happening soon. The language used in this

ACHEIROPOIETA

The Image of Camuliana and other objects mentioned in this volume are examples of *acheiropoieta*, a term used for religious images that are "not made by (human) hands." The label covers both the original image and any copies also believed to have been made miraculously. This category of images was conferred special veneration throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire. A significant number of *acheiropoieta* originated in the early Byzantine period, before the appearance of Iconoclasm in the early eighth century. During the period of Iconoclasm, these objects were defended based on the belief that God played a direct role in their creation. Therefore, to preserve and to cherish them could not be considered idolatry. *Achieropoieta* also came to symbolize the Incarnation, as it was believed that the divine powers of the original image were transferred to its copies. The most famous *acheiropoieta* included the Mandylion, a white cloth imprinted with the face and neck of Jesus, and the Keramion, a ceramic tile that received the impression of Christ's face from the Mandylion.

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description connects this ritual to the processions of the emperor. The Camuliana may have earned that kind of recognition because of its divine origin. These stories may have been created well after the fact, as a response to the Iconoclasts who objected to the worship of manmade objects. By claiming that Jesus himself created the Camuliana, how could anyone argue that he would disapprove of the rituals surrounding it? Furthermore, its creation led to the image being considered a physical representation of the Incarnation, the act of God becoming a man.

The Image of Camuliana was moved to Constantinople in 574 CE during the reign of Justin II (r. 565–574 CE), although it is unclear whether this was done at his request. As a palladium, the image was used at the battle of the Arzamon River in 586 CE. It may also have been used by Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) during the war against the Persian Empire. Beyond that, though, the Camuliana seems to disappear from the historical record. Although no sources mention its fate, the image was probably lost during Iconoclasm.

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See also: *Individuals*: Heraclius; *Groups and Organizations*: Iconoclasts; Persians; *Key Events*: Iconoclastic Controversy; Persia, Wars with; *Objects and Artifacts*: Mandylion of Edessa

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Codex Sinaiticus

With the advent of new technologies, it has become easier than ever for the average person to access historical texts without ever having to step foot in a library or archive. More and more institutions are choosing to digitally preserve and exhibit their collections, giving researchers everywhere the ability to read texts in their original form. One of the most important documents to undergo this process is the *Codex Sinaiticus*. Dated to the fourth century CE and written in Greek, this uncial codex (manuscripts

in book form, written entirely in capital letters) represents the improvements made in book production in its time, as well as early efforts to combine Christian holy texts into a single volume. In perceived authority, it is rivaled only by the *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Alexandrinus*. Today, the codex is divided between four institutions: the University Library in Leipzig, Germany; the Imperial Public Library in Saint Petersburg, Russia; the British Museum in London; and Saint Catherine's Monastery.

The *Codex Sinaiticus* was brought to the attention of the West by Konstantin von Tischendorf, a 19th-century theologian known for his publications of early biblical texts. While visiting Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai in 1844, Tischendorf came across a collection of folios in a basket and believed they had been set aside to be destroyed. He spent nearly two decades attempting to view the entire collection, which he eventually published in 1862. Tischendorf also managed to convince the monks to let him take the codex back with him, and it was presented to Czar Alexander II, who financed Tischendorf's trip and research. However, it is not clear whether the monks considered it a loan, or something more permanent. The codex was not formally transferred until 1869, after Russia agreed to some concessions for the monastery.

In 1975, some previously unknown fragments were found at the monastery. Even then, the codex is far from complete. Roughly 330 folios (pages in a codex) are missing from the Old Testament. However, the text is unique because it contains the full New Testament, including the Epistle of Barnabas, a book previously unknown in its Greek form. The codex also features thousands of corrections and additions, including some written in Arabic and dated to the 15th century. Tischendorf believed that the *Codex Sinaiticus* was one of the 50 Bibles commissioned from Eusebius of Caesarea, by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE). However, it is more likely that the codex was made for a private individual. Scholars have determined there were three different scribes who worked on the text.

How the *Codex Sinaiticus* arrived at Saint Catherine's is not known, nor is its point of origin. Egypt and Palestine (particularly Caesarea) are the top two contenders. It is unlikely that the codex originated at Saint Catherine's. In the fourth century, there was a church on the site, but not an institution capable of producing such a text. George Barrow, who visited the monastery in 1847, wrote that the monks had showed him a Bible that was given to them by Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), who founded the monastery in the sixth century. The climate on Mount Sinai is ideal for preserving parchment, and this allowed the codex to survive centuries without needing special care.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; *Objects and Artifacts*: *Codex Vaticanus*; *Key Places*: Egypt; Monastery of Saint Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt)

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Codex Vaticanus

The Vatican Library was founded by Pope Nicholas V in 1448. While the year of arrival is unknown, among the objects included in the catalog of 1481 was the *Codex Vaticanus*. Although it remained in the shadows for most of history, the text is now one of the famous Greek biblical codices, along with the *Sinaiticus* and *Alexandrinus*. When it was written, it was a complete version of the Bible. It is also the codex with the earliest date, and therefore the most authoritative.

In its current state, the *Codex Vaticanus* is missing the end portion of the New Testament. Some of the Old Testament is also missing, but that is partially due to the exclusion of some books when it was written. The codex was written in the 4th century, with corrections and annotations dating to as late as the 11th. The date of its transcription is based on several factors. The Vaticanus uses an older method of dividing books into chapters, and it shares strong similarities with some New Testament papyri dated to the 3rd century, more so than the other codices. The internal organization of the *Vaticanus* also indicates an earlier date. The codex's contents match that of the 37th Festal Letter of Athanasius, dated to 367 CE. Additionally, it ignores the Eusebian canon tables, which illustrate connections between the Gospels. This suggests the codex was written before the tables came into use. Egypt is considered the most likely point of origin, followed by Caesarea. The former is supported by similarities between the *Vaticanus* and the Coptic versions of biblical texts.

The study of the *Codex Vaticanus* has focused on its relationship to the other Greek Bibles, particularly the *Codex Sinaiticus*. Most of the texts agree with each other. Like the *Sinaiticus*, the *Vaticanus* was possibly written for private ownership, rather than a church. Both codices share the evolving technology of manuscript production that occurred in the fourth century. T. C. Skeat argued that the *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* had scribes in common and were not only written at the same site, but some of it by the same hand. Skeat went even further, claiming that both codices were some of the Bibles commissioned from Eusebius of Caesarea by Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE). However, these Bibles were to be used in Constantinople, and there is nothing to suggest that either codex was ever in the city.

There are also differences between the two codices. Compared with the *Sinaiticus*, the *Vaticanus* appears to have been less influenced by Latin texts from the Western Roman Empire. It is also less decorated than the *Sinaiticus*, which some believe indicates it was written first, although still in the same century.

In 1521, some sections of the *Codex Vaticanus* were used by Erasmus, and this marks the first time it was cited by anyone as an authoritative text. The codex

continued to be referenced in the 17th and 18th centuries, mostly in the form of collations. The *Vaticanus* was also a part of Richard Bentley's efforts to patch together a New Testament that resembled what was known during the Council of Nicaea. He began this project in 1716 and worked on it for years, studying dozens of texts. At the time, the *Codex Alexandrinus* was believed to be the oldest surviving copy of the Bible, and his work was based on this assumption. When Bentley realized that the *Vaticanus* dated even earlier, he abandoned the project rather than start from scratch. Until the 19th century, the Vatican limited access to the codex, for unknown reasons. In 1867, Konstantin von Tischendorf published a superior transcription of the *Vaticanus*, after he was allowed to briefly study it in 1843 and 1866. The first photographs were published by Giuseppe Cozza-Luzi in 1890, and it was digitized by the Vatican Library in 1999.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Key Events*: Nicaea, Council of; *Objects and Artifacts*: *Codex Sinaiticus*; *Key Places*: Egypt

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Crown of Aleppo

The Crown of Aleppo (or Aleppo Codex) is a parchment codex that, for a time, was the oldest complete edition of the Jewish Bible, or Tanakh. It is considered to have been one of the most authoritative biblical texts; Maimonides, the 12th-century Jewish philosopher, referred to the Crown during his study of the Torah. For centuries, it was kept in the Great Synagogue in Aleppo, Syria. In 1947, the synagogue was burned during rioting in response to the partitioning of Palestine. For years, it was believed the codex had been destroyed as well. In 1958, however, a member of the Aleppan Jewish community managed to smuggle it into Israel. A later assessment determined that many pages were missing, and that the remaining text was damaged. Today, the codex remains incomplete. A few pages of the codex are currently on display at the Shrine of the Book, in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, next to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The rest is kept archived. Officially, the Crown is owned by the Ben-Zvi Institute.

The colophon, a section containing the details of publication, is one of the lost portions of the Crown (a dedication was added later, but that is preserved only in copy). It is impossible to know the exact year the work was completed. It is believed that the codex was completed in the 10th century CE, in the city of Tiberias (in modern-day Israel). In this period, Tiberias was known for the work of the Masoretes, Jewish scholars who recorded the vocalizations of the Jewish Bible and noted them alongside the text. This body of notes is called the Masorah. The codex was written by two well-known Masoretes: Shlomo ben Buya'a, who wrote out the biblical text, and Aharon ben Asher, who added the Masoretic notes.

In the 11th century, the Crown was moved to Jerusalem, where it was kept by a Karaite community. Jerusalem was taken by the Seljuk Turks in 1071 and by Crusaders in 1099. It is unknown which group took the codex; an addition to the dedication states that the text was ransomed to the Jewish community of Fustat, a town in Egypt that would become part of the city of Cairo. It was in Fustat that the codex was studied and referenced by Maimonides, who was born in Cordoba in 1138 and worked in Fustat as a physician and philosopher. Maimonides mentioned the Crown in the *Mishneh Torah*, his complete work on Jewish law, writing that he studied the codex to learn how to properly produce Torah scrolls.

The codex was in the city of Aleppo as early as 1479, although it is possible it was moved earlier. There is debate over whether a descendant of Maimonides possessed the codex and brought it to Aleppo with him, or whether it had been stolen from Fustat. In Aleppo, the codex gained importance as a holy object. Aleppan Jews would come to the Great Synagogue and pray near it, and miracles were attributed to it. The codex was kept in a space called the Cave of Elijah, where it was believed that the prophet had once appeared. Following a fire at the synagogue, it was kept inside an iron box, along with other codices, and secured with two different locks. Access to the codex was restricted, with only a handful of individuals being granted permission to study the text. Prior to the riot of 1947, attempts had been made to move the Crown of Aleppo to Israel. However, the Aleppan Jews had been unwilling, citing a curse in the dedication that forbade selling or stealing it.

The history of the Crown after the 1947 fire is unclear. Multiple accounts of its rescue exist, with some claiming that the codex was still mostly complete when found. It is known that the Crown was brought to Israel in 1958 by Murad Faham, an Aleppan Jew who was being deported from Syria. Before Faham left the city, two rabbis approached him and asked him to hide the codex in his belongings. However, Faham transferred it to Israeli President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, rather than a member of the Aleppan Jewish community. This resulted in a dispute of legal ownership, which was resolved by creating a board of trustees that had both Aleppan and Israeli members. The codex was placed in the Ben-Zvi Institute, also a part of the agreement. However, it was eventually moved to the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum, its current location.

It is unknown how so many pages came to be missing. The beginning and end sections are gone, along with pages throughout the middle. It was believed that they had burned in the fire of 1947. However, it was later shown that what were thought to be

burn marks were caused by a strain of fungus. Individual pages were found and kept by other Aleppan Jews. Some of these have been found as photocopies; one page located in 1981 was given to the Ben-Zvi Institute. It is generally accepted that the missing sections were removed, before or after the codex's arrival in Israel, and may still exist.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Writing; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Islam, Expansion of; *Key Places*: Egypt; Jerusalem

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David Plates

The David Plates are the collective term for a set of nine plates that depict various biblical scenes from the life of King David. The plates are made of pure silver and come in three sizes; one is 19.5 inches, four are 10.5 inches, and four are 5.5 inches. The plates were discovered by local workers alongside other valuable Byzantine objects in 1902 on the island of Cyprus, at the site of the Byzantine town of Lambousa (near modern-day Karavas). The Cypriot government, upon hearing of the objects, confiscated three of the plates. Those are now at the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia. The remaining six were sold by a Parisian dealer to J. P. Morgan, whose descendants eventually entrusted them to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where they are currently on display.

These objects were not to be eaten from. Decorative plate displays were quite common from this period, although the subject matter of the David Plates is not. Given the subject matter and quality of materials and design, they were used as status symbols of the wealthy and educated. They were also often sent as gifts. The plates were probably arranged in a wall display resembling the shape of the Christogram, a blend of the cross and c, the Greek letter chi. The largest plate would have been placed in the center, with the rest put chronologically according to the order of events in the Bible.

The scenes were chosen from the book 1 Samuel and are as follows:

- David being summoned by the prophet Samuel
- Samuel anointing David as king
- David arguing with Eliab, his brother
- David coming before King Saul
- David slaying a bear
- David slaying a lion
- David arming himself for battle against Goliath
- The battle between David and Goliath (divided into three registers)
- David marrying Michal, the daughter of King Saul

The David Plates were created by highly skilled artisans working anonymously in Constantinople in shops managed directly by the imperial palace. After forming the basic shape of the plate from silver, an artist would have marked the design on the surface. The general shapes would have been hammered in from the back to create a raised surface. Then, the details would have been carved into those shapes from the front. The plates can be dated according to the stamp of Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor in 610–641 CE. One popular theory is that the plates were made in celebration of Heraclius's victorious campaign against the Sassanids in 628–629 CE, during which Jerusalem was retaken. As a result, they are often dated to these years.

A series of beautifully crafted silver plates depicts biblical scenes from the life of David, king of Israel. The plates were made in the seventh century, perhaps in celebration of Emperor Heraclius and his remarkable triumph over Persia and the retaking of Jerusalem in 628–629 CE. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917)

The choices made by the artist show an appreciation of classical Greek and Roman art. The figures on the plates have clear features, even down to the definition of their leg muscles. In action scenes, body positioning and clothing all suggest movement. Classical images are used, such as sun, moon, and stars to show heaven. However, Christian and Byzantine elements were also incorporated into the design. Samuel and David are sometimes sporting halos, indicating God's favor. Both David and King Saul are shown in Byzantine garments, and the military uniforms are

Roman in fashion. Bags of material wealth, present in some of the scenes, have been interpreted as recalling the Roman practice of *sparsio*, the giving of money to the masses. Many scholars have suggested that this shows a deliberate attempt to connect the reign of Heraclius with the mythos of King David. More recently, it has been argued that the David Plates should be read not as imperial propaganda, but rather a sign that biblical narratives were gradually taking the place of classical Greek myths in secular culture.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Guilds; *Individuals*: Heraclius; *Key Events*: Persia, Wars with; *Objects and Artifacts*: Missorium of Theodosius I

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Equestrian Statue of Justinian I

Also called Justinian's Column, this statue depicted the emperor on horseback. The statue was erected in 543 CE. Sometimes referred to as the Augustaion, the name of the square in which the statue was located, it was one of the most prominent attractions in Constantinople.

The statue was 27 feet tall and made of bronze. The statue rested on a 100-foot brick column. Although it was erected by Justinian after the Hagia Sophia was completed, it is possible that the statue was originally made during the reign of either Theosodius I or II. Whichever emperor the statue was modeled after, the figure is dressed in a military uniform meant to mirror that of Achilles. His helmet was decorated with a *toupha*, a piece of animal hair. He held an orb and cross in his left hand. The right hand pointed to the east, and its orientation has been interpreted as a warning to foreign

threats. In Justinian's time, this threat would have been the Sassanid Empire, but the same meaning was attributed to the statue's placement when the empire faced invasions by Arabs and Turks. Over time, this developed into the belief that the statue protected the city, and the empire.

The Byzantine historian Procopius, who wrote extensively about the empire under Justinian, described the statue in *On Buildings*: "Upon this horse is mounted a colossal bronze figure of the Emperor. And the figure is habited like Achilles, that is, the costume he wears is known by that name. . . . And he looks toward the rising sun, directing his course, I suppose, against the Persians. And in his left hand he holds a globe, by which the sculptor signifies that the whole earth and sea are subject to him, yet he has neither sword nor spear nor any other weapon, but a cross stands upon the globe which he carries, the emblem by which alone he has obtained both his Empire and his victory in war. And stretching forth his right hand toward the rising sun and spreading out his fingers, he commands the barbarians in that quarter to remain at home and to advance no further." (Procopius I. ii. 7–12)

It has been assumed that the statue was immediately destroyed by Mehmed II (also known as Mehmed the Conqueror) following his capture of Constantinople in 1453. Given its symbolic importance to the city's inhabitants, the Ottomans would not have been willing to let the statue remain as a symbol of Byzantine power. The Byzantines knew this, and over time the statue's purpose morphed into protection against the plague, possibly to convince the Ottomans that the statue should be preserved. An analysis of both Ottoman and Western sources indicates that the bronze statue was melted down into artillery to be used in the Ottoman attack on Belgrade in 1456. The column remained standing until the 16th century, when it was either taken down or allowed to collapse. An account by Peter Gyllius, who visited the city between 1544 and 1550, describes surviving pieces of the statue. He claims that he could measure the nose and hooves, each nine inches long. He also measured a leg and proclaimed it to be longer than he was tall. Gyllius wrote that the pieces were being removed from the Topkapi Palace to be melted down. This suggests that, despite the importance of the statue to the city's conquered population, Mehmed II chose to preserve some fragments.

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See also: *Individuals:* Justinian; Procopius; Theodosius II; *Key Events*: Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Gold Solidus of Justinian I

The solidi of Justinian I are gold Byzantine coins minted during his reign (527–565 CE). Many examples of this coinage are found in private collections or kept at such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum. The Byzantine Empire's monetary system was largely based on the solidus, and the coin also influenced the currencies of Western medieval kingdoms.

The gold *solidus* was originally a Roman coin first minted in 301 CE, during Emperor Diocletian's reign. It continued to be minted during the Byzantine era. Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) was the first emperor to depict himself on the *solidus* facing forward, and this became the standard for imperial depictions on Byzantine coinage. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Bequest of Joseph H. Durkee, 1898)

The solidus was originally minted by the emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) as a replacement for the *aureus* (an earlier gold coin denomination), and first produced on a mass scale during the reign of Constantine (r. 306–337 CE). It was one of the few coin denominations to be carried over into the Byzantine Empire. In Latin, *solidus* as an adjective translates to "solid" or "whole," likely referring to the fact that the coin was made entirely of gold. These coins were also referred to as *nomisma*, the Greek term for coins generally. Standardized by Constantine in 330 CE, one pound of gold produced 72 solidi, making each coin 24 carats. Although several cities had their own mints, solidi came primarily from Ravenna, Carthage, and Constantinople. The solidus was the only denomination accepted for the payment of

taxes, and the coins were melted down and recreated almost immediately. Because solidi were never in circulation long enough to become worn, the weight stayed consistent. This led to the coin being held up as a standard for monetary systems, throughout much of Christendom. As the Western Roman Empire dissolved in the fifth century CE, gold became harder to acquire. The solidus was supplanted by the *tremissis*, another Roman-era gold coin worth one-third of its predecessor.

The gold solidus was one of three gold-based denominations used during the reign of Justinian, the others being the *tremissis* mentioned above and the *semissis* (worth one-half of a solidus). Justinian's solidi followed the standard design. Solidi were engraved with a depiction of the emperor facing forward on the obverse (or face), and a figure (at first a Victory figure, a holdover from pagan times, then an angel) on the reverse. As with other coins from his reign, the following phrase is engraved on the obverse: *DNIVSTINIANVSPPAVG*, or *Dominus Noster Justinianus Perpetuus Augustus*. This translates from Latin to "Our Lord Justinian forever emperor." Byzantine coinage would not feature completely Greek inscriptions until the 11th century. Justinian is commonly depicted holding an orb and cross. As with the coinage of previous emperors, he is wearing a military uniform. Unlike that of both Roman and later Byzantine coinage, the image of Justinian is not meant to be physically accurate. The reverse side of the solidus normally depicted an angel/Victory holding an orb and cross. An alternate version has the cross replaced with the Chi-Rho. Other markings varied, including abbreviations indicating the mint in which the coin was produced. For example, some solidi are marked with *CONOB*, which stood for "*Constantinopolis obryzum*," the second word translating to "refined gold." *OB* was also the Greek form of the number 72.

Three other variations of solidi from Justinian's reign are known to have been minted. One was a coin equal to 36 solidi that was possibly presented to his general

BYZANTINE COINAGE

The solidus was just one element of the Byzantine Empire's coinage system, which had its roots in the late Roman Empire. Coins were made of gold, silver, copper, and lead. The denominations varied throughout the life of the empire, changing in response to state finances and the economy in general. The most important coin was undoubtedly the gold *solidus* or *nomisma*. It was introduced by Constantine I in the fourth century CE and used as the currency standard for 700 years. Later, it was eventually replaced by the electrum *hyperpyron* from the 12th century CE. Like the Romans, the Byzantines used the carat as the unit of measurement for a coin's weight. A total of 20 mints were founded in the empire, not only in the capital but in cities such as Syracuse, Jerusalem, and Carthage. Byzantine coins were commonly marked with imperial portraits, religious symbols, and markings indicating their value. Latin and Greek were both used on coinage, with the latter replacing the former in the 11th century. The coinage in the Byzantine Empire served as a convenient method of payment for goods and services, especially to soldiers and officials, and as a means for people to pay their taxes.

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Belisarius. It featured Justinian on the obverse in three-quarter profile, and Victory on the reverse. This coin found its way into the possession of King Louis XV of France in 1751, and it was lost in 1831. The second variation is a gold coin similar to the ancient aureus in weight. The third was a coin minted to recognize Justinian as consul, with two Victories and a cross on the reverse.

Following the Arab conquest in the 7th and 8th centuries CE, the solidus was replaced by the dinar as the currency of trade in the East. In the 14th century CE, the Byzantine Empire transitioned into a monetary system based entirely on silver. Although solidi continued to circulate, the coins became virtually worthless as currency.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Fiscal System; Taxes; *Individuals*: Belisarius; Justinian; *Key Events*: Islam, Expansion of; Rome, Fall of

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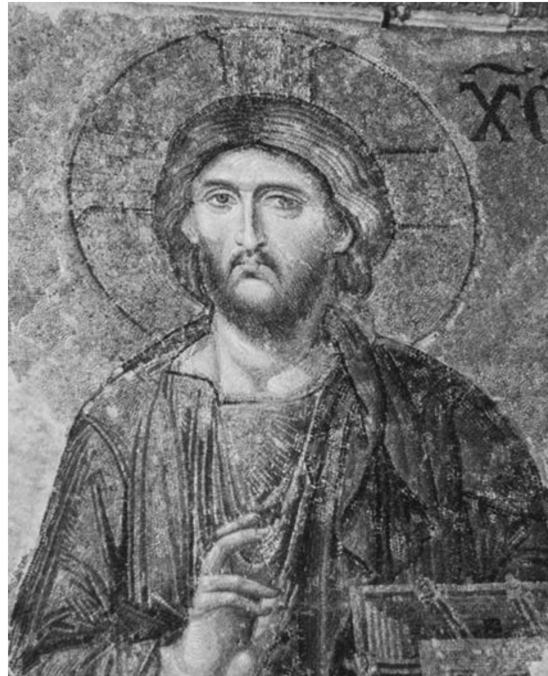
Hagia Sophia Mosaics

The Hagia Sophia is arguably the most important architectural feat of the Byzantine Empire. The church was built by Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) in 532–537 CE, after the original church was destroyed during the Nika revolt. For nearly a millennium, it was the most important religious structure in Constantinople, and possibly in the whole empire. The structure is perhaps best known for its collection of mosaics, created over 800 years. Mosaics were perhaps chosen because of the visual effect the medium has on worshippers, particularly for the ability to reflect light. Although they are not mentioned specifically by Procopius in the sixth century CE, the historian does say that the church was covered in gold.

Very few of the original mosaics still exist. All are abstract, without specific persons represented. Some have questioned this, because other contemporary churches

were choosing to create portraits with mosaics. However, the first figure mosaics were added during the reign of Justin II. These were probably replaced during Iconoclasm, when such depictions were considered sacrilegious. This replacement was eventually undone, possibly beginning in 867 CE. In a sermon given by Patriarch Photius (r. 858–867; 877–886 CE) in that year, a mosaic of the Virgin Mary and Jesus as a child was unveiled. This mosaic still exists, alongside the remnants of an inscription commemorating the event. More figures were added to the mosaic collection, a process that took decades. More mosaics were added during the reign of Basil II (r. 976–1025 CE). More broadly, the addition of figure mosaics connects to a transition from symbolic representation to human depiction in Christian art, beginning in the ninth century. At the same time, a variety of stones were beginning to be used in mosaics throughout the empire.

The mosaics in the Hagia Sophia were positioned according to prominence, reflecting the hierarchy of various secular and religious figures. They can be approximately dated according to contemporary trends in art and fashion, along with the information we have on the figures chosen. One section contained portraits of emperors and patriarchs, three of which still exist. The mosaics were also influenced by changes to the liturgy. For example, there is a 14th-century mosaic of Emperor John V Palaeologus (r. 1341–1391) depicted underneath Mary as the Virgin of the Magnificat. The Magnificat is a hymn adapted from the Gospel of Luke, specifically the passage where Mary announces the coming of Jesus. This illustrated the emperor's divine authority in all matters of state and religion. Another well-known mosaic is the Deesis, showing Jesus with Mary and John the Baptist in their role as intercessors. This dates to the 13th century, after the city was retaken by Michael VIII Palaeologus (r. 1259–1282).



This mosaic in the Hagia Sophia was likely part of Emperor Michael VIII's (r. 1259–1282) "re-founding" of the city, like a new Constantine, after his restoration of Constantinople from the hands of Catholic forces which had held it since the Fourth Crusade in 1204. This mosaic is a *deesis* ("supplication"), which presents Christ receiving a petition from the Virgin and John the Baptist who intercede on the world's behalf. (Corel)

When Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453, the Hagia Sophia was made a mosque. The Ottomans chose to use the space

in much the same way as the Byzantines, albeit for a different faith. Due to the proscription against human figures in Islam, the figure mosaics were gradually covered in plaster. However, this was a process. Ahmed I, for example, chose which mosaics to cover according to Islamic teachings. In his reign, Mary and Jesus were left uncovered due to their importance in Islam. However, all the mosaics were covered by the 18th century.

The Hagia Sophia underwent restoration in 1847–1849 by the Fossati brothers, on the order of Sultan Abdulmecid I. The Fossatis found the mosaics under the plaster but covered them again once the restoration was completed. Abdulmecid may have wanted them fully restored, but he faced opposition from conservatives. Following this, an earthquake struck the mosque in 1894, and repairs apparently damaged some of the mosaic collection. The Byzantine Institute, led by Thomas Whittemore, permanently uncovered the mosaics in 1931–1939. At the same time, the Hagia Sophia was opened to the public as a museum. Today, the surviving mosaics remain on display.

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See also: *Individuals*: Justinian; Procopius; *Key Events*: Nika Revolt; *Key Places*: Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

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Holy Lance

The Holy Lance has a complicated history, primarily because so many separate objects claim to be the true lance (or at least a portion of it). However, there is a comparatively singular account of discovery. The story of the Holy Lance starts with Helena, the mother of Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE), who was later canonized. Helena found the lance, used by the Roman soldier Longinus to pierce Jesus's side during the Crucifixion, in Jerusalem sometime in the 4th century CE. It remained there until 614 CE,

when the city was captured by the Persians and the lance was moved to Constantinople. It was kept first at the Hagia Sophia, then the imperial palace, then the Pharos chapel, until Crusaders occupied the capital in the 13th century. The lance was then sold to King Louis IX of France, along with other sacred objects. However, sources continue to mention it as still being in Constantinople, as late as the 15th century, leading to the theory that the object had been broken into pieces. The object still in Constantinople when the city fell in 1453 was sent to Rome, where it has remained to this day. The Holy Lance of Paris was kept at Sainte-Chappelle, then lost during the French Revolution.

In the 11th century, the provenance of the Constantinopolitan lance was challenged. Soldiers of the First Crusade took Antioch from the Seljuks in 1098, and then were immediately besieged themselves by Kerbogha and his forces. The Holy Lance was discovered in the city at this point, leading to a morale boost and eventual victory for the Crusaders. According to the legend, the lance was found by Peter Bartholomew, who began having visions of Jesus and Saint Andrew telling him that it was buried under the church of Saint Peter. Of course, its authenticity was challenged by the existence of the Holy Lance in Constantinople. Bartholomew would later die in a trial by fire, trying to defend his claims. However, the Crusaders largely accepted its divine power. The entire city celebrated its discovery, and a cult of worship grew up around it. The Holy Lance of Antioch was given to Raymond of Toulouse, who brought it to Constantinople in 1100 and presented it to Emperor Alexius I (r. 1081–1118). If the lance was returned to Raymond, it was probably lost in Anatolia in 1101. However, Alexius may have kept the object and relabeled it as a nail from the Crucifixion, creating a cross to go along with it. It may have been this object that was later given to the French king.

Another claimant, currently at the Imperial Treasury in Vienna, is a lance point dated to the seventh century that supposedly holds a nail from the Crucifixion (similar to the Holy Lance of Antioch). Also connected to the legend of Saint Maurice, this object served multiple functions—religious and political—in medieval Germany. It was used in the wars against pagan Slavs, and as a symbol of royal power in Germany and Italy. The lance point was given to Henry I of Germany by Rudolf I of Burgundy, in either 926 or 935 CE. Henry was told that its first owner had been Constantine himself, and that whoever possessed it could not be defeated in battle. The lance point apparently proved its value at the Battle of Birten in 939 CE. Henry's son Otto I of Germany prayed to the object for victory against his brother and challenger, Duke Henry I of Bavaria. During battle, Henry was struck but not killed. However, sources later claimed that he did eventually die from this injury, albeit many years later, and that this was divinely caused. Despite its status as a relic, it became the property of the Holy Roman emperor and was used to recognize successors, who were chosen by a mix of election and hereditary right. This may have been a continuance of lances serving as symbols of elite status in many Germanic kingdoms. A lance appears on the imperial seal of Otto III (r. 980–1002 CE), and on coins from the 11th century, minted in connection with the Investiture Controversy.

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See also: *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Constantine the Great; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Events*: First Crusade; *Key Places*: Antioch; Jerusalem; *Primary Documents*: Document 7

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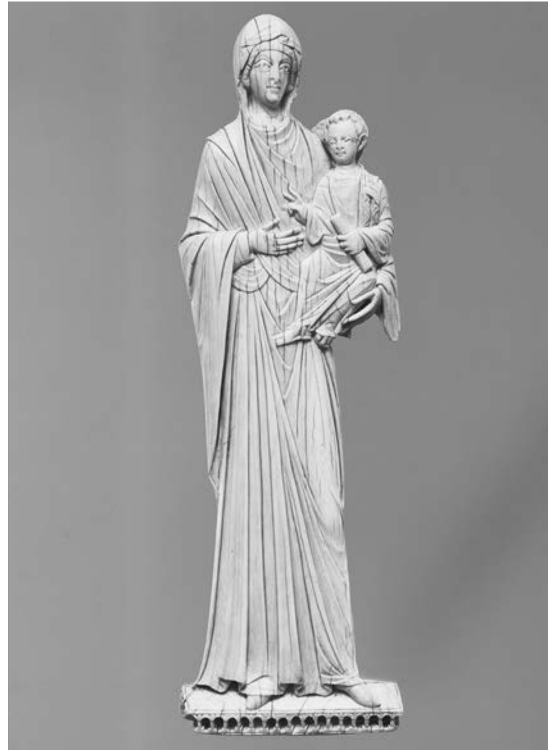
Icon of the Virgin Hodegetria

The Hodegetria is one of several archetypical icons of the Virgin Mary as the *Theotokos*, or Mother of God. The translation for Hodegetria is "she who shows the way." This portrayal is defined as Mary holding the infant Jesus, gesturing to him with her hand. Although the Hodegetria has its origins in the period before Iconoclasm, it was most popular during the middle (843–1204 CE) and late (1261–1453) Byzantine periods. Two prominent examples include the Sinai hexaptych (11th century CE) and the Hamilton Psalter (13th century CE); a very early Hodegetria is the Madonna del Pantheon (7th century CE).

The Hodegetria symbolized the *Incarnation*, the doctrine that establishes Jesus as both divine and human. It also emphasized the role of Mary as intercessor. Artists made adaptions of the standard icon, including the distinction between "austere" and "tender" depictions. Some icons were explicitly titled "Hodegetria," declaring themselves official copies. The original was described as showing Jesus's crucifixion on the reverse. It has been suggested that the Hodegetria, along with other depictions of the Virgin, was an adaptation of Egyptian iconography of the goddess Isis. The Hodegetria can be found in various media, including seals and jewelry, and it was a popular representation of the Virgin Mary and Christ. Some examples of pre-Iconoclastic Hodegetria come from as early as the sixth century, well before any mention of the original icon.

Beginning in the eighth century CE, tradition held that Saint Luke painted portraits of the Holy Family, and that many ancient icons were done by his hand. The Hodegetria was later identified as one of these icons. Empress Pulcheria was given the original Hodegetria by Eudocia, her sister-in-law, in 450 CE. The icon came from Palestine; other sources say Antioch, where Luke was born. It is likely that the story was later

invented to give the icon a divine origin. Luke may have been chosen for this honor because out of the four Gospels, his contains the most information about Jesus's early life. Alternatively, the myth may have come as a response to the Iconoclasts. The Hodegetria icon itself became a symbol of the end of Iconoclasm.



The Virgin Hodegetria refers to a particular depiction of the Virgin Mary and Christ as an infant. This example is from the mid-10th to mid-11th century—the period following the Iconoclastic controversy—when the Hodegetria type was particularly popular. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917)

The original Hodegetria, a painted icon, was known as the Theotokos of the Hodegon Monastery, which was founded in the 9th century CE and connected to an ancient spring believed to have healing powers. Later accounts would assign these powers to the icon itself, along with exorcisms and other miracles. The icon was decorated with silver and precious stones and kept covered. It was attended to by an elite group called the hodegoi. The earliest evidence of the icon's existence comes from the 10th century, and of its cult status in the 11th century. Apart from this, the date of the Hodegetria's creation is unknown; it is likely that it was made immediately after Iconoclasm.

The Hodegetria was featured in a liturgical procession (*litania*) each Tuesday from the Hodegon to one of the many churches in Constantinople, where a Mass was performed. This brought the icon out for public worship, and onlookers would repeat Mary's gesture to Jesus as a part of the veneration. The procession reenacted the entrance of the young Mary into the Temple, and other cities mirrored this custom as well. In one account, as the Hodegetria passed the Chalke gate, it would turn itself to face an icon of Christ that was kept there. The icon was also honored in the month of August, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and in an annual event connected to the celebration of Easter and the Akathistos hymn.

The Hodegetria was considered a palladium, or protective talisman against the enemies of Constantinople, and cities such as Thessaloniki claimed their own Hodegetria icons for the same purpose. The first recorded instance was in 1186, when the icon was brought to the city walls during an attack from the usurper Branas; earlier

victories were later attributed to the icon. In 1261, when Constantinople was recaptured from the Crusaders by Michael VIII Palaeologus, he entered the city carrying the Hodegetria. The Comnenus family was especially devoted to the icon, and it was present at the funeral of John II Comnenus (1143) and an annual event thereafter.

In 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans, the Hodegetria was kept in the Chora monastery. When the Ottomans entered the city, they found the icon and broke it into four pieces. It is unknown what became of them. Refugees spread throughout the Mediterranean, bringing their own Hodegetria icons and traditions with them.

The Hodegetria can be seen in Western Europe beginning in the 11th century CE in Italy; its legend spread as far as Scandinavia. By the 16th and 17th centuries CE, the Hodegetria was being used as palladia in places such as Naples and Sicily, particularly against natural calamities. The icon continued to be popular in the Renaissance, when it was referenced by artists such as El Greco. Hodegetria icons were also central to the ceremonies of the Russian Orthodox Church. An embroidered textile at Moscow's State Historical Museum depicts what is believed to be a Palm Sunday procession from 1498. A Hodegetria icon, carried on a pole, is the focus of the scene.

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See also: *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Iconoclastic Controversy; Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus; *Key Places*: Antioch; Egypt; Great Palace of Constantinople; *Primary Documents*: Document 26

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Khakhuli Triptych

The Khakhuli (also spelled "Xaxuli") triptych is a 12th-century art object used as a case for an icon of the Virgin Mary. Its name comes from the original home of its icon, the Khakhuli Monastery in Tao (modern-day Georgia). The three-panel case is known for its cloisonné enamel pieces, as well as its metalwork. The Khakhuli icon was

relocated by Georgian King David the Builder (1089–1125) as a part of the foundation of the monastery at Gelati. The triptych was created shortly after. What remains of the triptych is now at the National Museum of Art in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The Khakhuli triptych is one of the largest pieces of enamel art in the world, measuring 45.67 by 37.40 inches. The two side panels are covered in silver and have been dated to the 10th century. The central icon panel was updated in the 12th century with gold and a floral motif as the background. All three panels include precious stones, as well as the enamel pieces for which the triptych is known. The dates for these enamels range from the 8th to 12th centuries. While some scholars believe that they were made in Georgia, it has been argued that they came from the Byzantine Empire as imperial and diplomatic gifts. Many of the enamels feature religious figures such as saints, apostles, and images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Others are decorative designs. Of the 118 enamel pieces on the triptych, 8 are replacements from the 19th century. Although the arrangement of the Khakhuli triptych is symmetrical and was clearly planned, there is no overarching iconographic theme. Figures appear on the triptych more than once, and some enamels appear to have been added after Dimitri's reign. It has been suggested that Dimitri was forced to choose from a small number of triptychs that were available, instead of having a wide selection at his disposal. There have been attempts to organize the enamels according to how they may have been originally displayed on other objects.

Work on the Gelati monastery began in 1106, and the Khakhuli icon was moved there sometime between then and the end of David the Builder's life. The monastery was dedicated to the Virgin, and the selection of this icon suggests that it was already a highly valued religious object, possibly credited with miracles. The monastery was completed under reign of David's son Dimitri I (r. 1125–1156). It was also Dimitri who commissioned the triptych to serve as a case for the icon. An inscription on the object compares David the Builder and Dimitri (members of the Bagratid Dynasty) to the biblical kings David and Solomon, respectively; like the Virgin Mary, they are David's descendants. Through this connection, the Bagratid kings sought her protection of their kingdom. The creation of the triptych is likened to that of the Ark of the Covenant, and it symbolized this relationship. Georgian rulers continued to donate in recognition of the icon as late as the 19th century.

The central icon in the Khakhuli triptych is of the Mother of God Hagiosoritissa. The Hagiosoritissa style of icon is defined as showing Mary turned to the viewer's left, with her arms raised in supplication; the original icon of this type was kept in Constantinople at the church of the Chalkoprateia. The icon originated in either 10th-century Georgia or 11th-century Constantinople, and it is not mentioned in primary sources until it was moved to the Gelati monastery. An account from 1650 describes the icon as seen in the monastery in Gelati. It showed Mary above the waist and with her hands lifted in prayer. Like the Hodegetria icon of Constantinople, the object was attributed to Saint Luke. It was described as painted on a metal background and decorated with precious stones. The author appears to have mistaken the enamelwork for paint.

In 1859, the icon was stolen from the Khakhuli triptych. A metal reproduction was made and given to the church as a replacement. Three of the enamel pieces—the head and hands—were acquired by Mikhail Petrovich Botkin, an artist and collector in

Saint Petersburg. The pieces were returned to Georgia in 1923. In 1952, the Khakhuli triptych was given to the National Museum of Art. The replication of the Virgin Mary icon was removed, and the recovered enamel pieces took its place without the original metalwork surrounding it. Based on descriptions and sketches of the icon prior to its theft, it has been speculated that the existing hands and feet are not the original pieces of the icon.

Another important image in the triptych is an enamel of Byzantine Emperor Michael VII Doukas and Maria of Alania, a member of the Georgian royal family, being crowned by Jesus Christ. Michael VII Doukas ruled in Constantinople from 1071–1078, and this helps to provide a date for the creation of this enamel piece. One possibility is that this enamel, along with several others in the triptych, was once a part of a votive crown. In 1072, Maria returned to Georgia for her father's funeral, and it is believed that she brought the image with her. When the triptych is closed, it is the only visible image, signifying its prestige.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Diplomacy; *Objects and Artifacts*: Icon of the Virgin Hodegetria; *Key Places*: Byzantium

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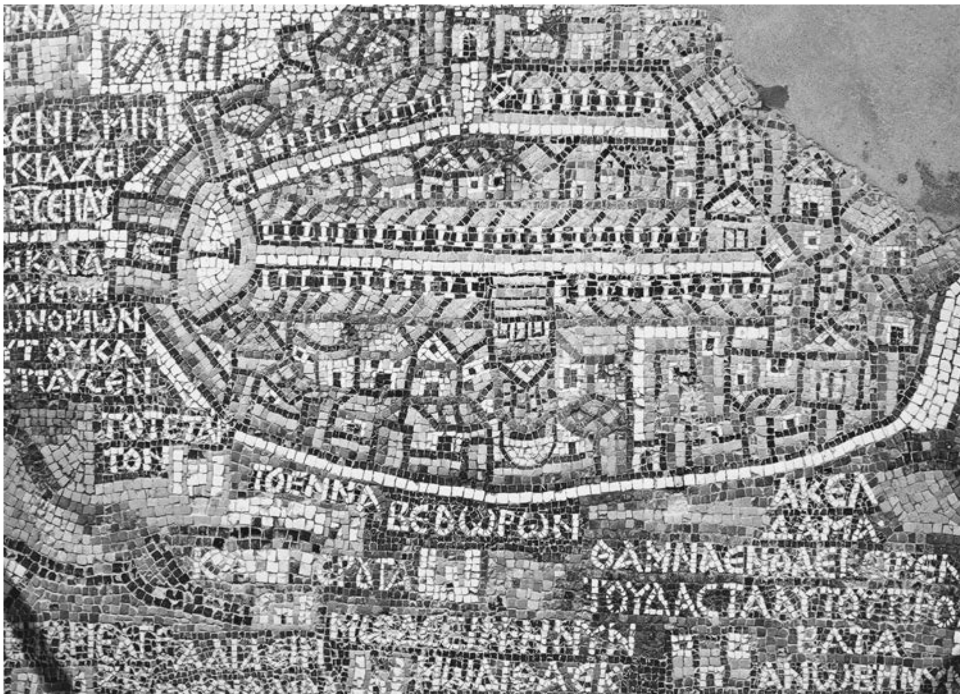
Madaba, Map of

Maps are perhaps one of the rarest sources of historical information from antiquity, and so the discovery of one is often groundbreaking. In 1884, Christians in the town of Madaba, Jordan, were working on the reconstruction of a church. Once a thriving city of the Byzantine Empire, Madaba had been taken during the Persian invasions of the seventh century, then damaged by an earthquake in the eighth century. Since

then, the site had been unoccupied. During their work, the new inhabitants uncovered a mosaic map on the floor of the church, now known as the Madaba map. The map was damaged in 1896, during the construction of a new church, but some in the town recognized the mosaic's importance. It was eventually saved and first documented by Cleopas M. Koikylides, a librarian sent by the Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem. The Madaba map is one of the oldest existing maps showing the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding area; the only possible rival is the Tabula Peutingeriana, a possible copy of a Roman map from the fourth or fifth century.

The Madaba map is dated to the sixth century, according to the mosaic style and the known dates of existence for certain features, and 557 CE is one of the more recent and exact dates argued for. There are strong similarities with the art at the Church of Saints Lot and Procopius, a site close to Madaba. When it was made, the mosaic stretched across the floor of the church, along the transept or cross arm. The original boundaries of the map were Byblos and Damascus in the north, Thebes in the south, the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and Petra in the east. The northern section is mostly gone, and today, all that exists are the Nile delta and parts of the Levant south of the Jordan River. The eastern portion of the map is at the top, matching the



The Map of Madaba is a sixth-century mosaic depiction of the Holy Land, with the city of Jerusalem in the center. Some of the city's landmarks, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Damascus Gate, are clearly visible. The map is located on the floor of the Church of Saint George in Madaba, Jordan, and it was rediscovered during restoration efforts in the late 19th century. (DeAgostini/Getty Images)

orientation of the church. Repairs appear to have been made to the map throughout its history. For example, human figures on the map may have been removed during Iconoclasm but were later fixed.

The creator of the Madaba map chose to portray features as they were in the sixth century, making it a realistic, rather than idealistic, depiction. However, there was no concern for correct proportions. There are topographical details, and cities and towns are labeled, sometimes with both their ancient and contemporary names. Some locations appear to have been chosen for their significance to Christianity. For example, the territories of the Twelve Tribes of Israel were marked on the map, along with related biblical verses. Jerusalem is at the center of the map, indicating its importance. The city is very detailed, showing individual gates and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Besides the aforementioned human figures, other embellishments include boats, animals, and plants.

The Madaba map has proved to be a crucial source for the geography of the Holy Land. It has been studied alongside other sources, including the fourth-century Onomasticon of Eusebius. This may have been one of the sources used to create the map, along with a Roman road map. It is likely that the creator also used some Jewish sources. For some marked locations, the map is the only source of their existence. It has also been proved accurate through archaeological fieldwork. In 2010, excavations in Jerusalem uncovered a road that can be seen on the map but was unaccounted for anywhere else. The map has even been used to study the climate of the sixth-century Levant, particularly by measuring changes in size of the Dead Sea.

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See also: *Key Events*: Iconoclastic Controversy; Persia, Wars with; *Key Places*: Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem); Jerusalem

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Mandylion of Edessa

The Mandylion of Edessa was an image of Jesus Christ recognized as a holy icon in the Byzantine Empire. The tale of the Mandylion originated in the city of Edessa

(modern-day Urfa, Turkey), where it was prized as a connection to Jesus and his disciples. The Greek word *mandylion* is derived from the Latin *mantilium*, meaning cloth or mantle, the image's medium. If the Mandylion existed as described, it would be one of the earliest miraculous icons in Christian history. The image has been linked to other miraculous images, especially legends of the Veil of Veronica and the Image of Camuliana. Sources describe the Mandylion as an *acheiropoietos*, an object not made by human hands. The imprint was made from either Jesus's sweat or blood. The image on the cloth was the face of Jesus, with some texts claiming that his whole body was depicted. In Edessa, the cloth was decorated in gold and displayed at the entrance to the city. When it was secluded for safekeeping, it was accompanied by a lamp and incense. Today, the Mandylion is considered lost.

The most complete account of the Mandylion comes from the *Narratio de imagine Edessena*, attributed to Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913–959 CE). According to this source, King Abgar of Edessa suffered from arthritis and leprosy. His servant Ananias, having seen Jesus perform miracles, shared his account. The king was convinced of the story's authenticity and wrote to Jesus and asked him to come to Edessa to heal him. Ananias delivered the letter to Jesus, who declined the invitation. Instead, he wrote a reply to Abgar, saying that a disciple would be sent to him to perform the healing. The letter promised that under God's protection, Edessa would never fall to its enemies. Jesus also gave the messenger a cloth he used to dry his face, creating a miraculous image of his likeness. The source also records another version, where the image is created in Gethsemane. The cloth was given to the disciple Thomas, who sends another disciple, Thaddeus, to Edessa. Upon seeing the image, the king was healed and immediately converted to Christianity.

The Abgar legend has no historical evidence, apart from a king of Edessa named Abgar in the first century. Christianity probably reached the city in the second century, before it came under control of the Roman Empire. Some have theorized that the

KING LOUIS IX OF FRANCE

Also known as Saint Louis, Louis IX of France (1214–1270 CE) was the most popular member of the Capetian Dynasty. He undertook two crusades: he led the Seventh Crusade to the Holy Land in 1248–1250 CE and died on another Crusade to Tunisia. King Louis came to possess many Christian relics during the Crusader occupation of Constantinople, and it has been claimed that the Mandylion of Edessa was among these relics. He acquired relics of Christ's passion from his cousin, the Latin emperor of Constantinople Baldwin II. Geoffrey of Beaulieu, his contemporary, mentioned specifically the Crown of Thorns and a piece of the True Cross. Geoffrey described the effort as dangerous, and so he saw this as evidence of the king's exemplary faith. Louis IX brought these relics to Paris and placed them in the Sainte-Chapelle, a chapel he had built to house them. The chapel also functioned as a symbol of the Capetians' alliance with God. This link between God and French kings was established by symbolizing Solomon's temple in the design of the reliquary. If the Mandylion was brought there, it was certainly destroyed during the French Revolution, when the chapel was looted.

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legend was created to give authority to Edessa's Christian tradition, in response to the suspicions of Hellenistic Christians (the church in Edessa was Syriac). The details of the Abgar legend change frequently. The earliest account is the fourth-century *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, who claimed to have seen the original letters. However, he does not mention a holy image. An early version of the Mandylion appears in another source, as a portrait painted by Ananias. By the sixth century, it becomes a miraculously created portrait. The image's existence is tied to another physical collection: the letters of Abgar and Jesus. Some sources record the existence of letters, while others say that the messages were delivered orally. The letters themselves came to be viewed as miraculous, and the supposed originals were brought to Constantinople in 1032.

Although Abgar converted to Christianity, later kings of Edessa did not. The Mandylion was then hidden for protection, where it stayed until 544 CE. That year, the city was attacked by a Persian army. Edessa was saved when a tunnel was dug under a siege tower, which was set on fire. During the siege, the Mandylion was recovered, and the victory was attributed to its presence and Jesus's promise of protection. Sources claimed that the image could reproduce itself, a miracle that accounted for the existence of numerous copies. During Iconoclasm, the Mandylion's history was presented as evidence that holy images could not possibly be sacrilegious, as Jesus himself had created an image for others to worship.

The image remained in Edessa after the city was taken by Arabs in 638 CE. Three centuries later, the Byzantine Empire began the process of trying to recover its lost territory. In 943 CE, the image was exchanged for Muslim prisoners and a guarantee that Edessa would not be destroyed. This angered the city's Christian population, who nearly rioted. The Mandylion was brought to Constantinople, where it gradually lost its prestige, as there were already many icons of greater fame in the city. The story of the Mandylion of Edessa spread throughout Europe. Egeria, a Spanish nun who visited the Holy Land in the 4th century, wrote that copies of the Abgar-Jesus letters were already found on her side of the Mediterranean. There are references to the image in 13th-century Ireland, and one version of the Abgar legend names Armenia, rather than Edessa, as its point of origin. The Mandylion is also mentioned frequently in Arabic sources written during the Arab occupation, and it appears that the Muslims in Edessa valued the image while it was in their possession. The Mandylion has also been the subject of many pieces of art, most notably an icon from Saint Catherine's monastery in Sinai that has been dated to the 10th century.

The Mandylion of Edessa was likely lost in 1204, when Constantinople was occupied by the Crusaders. It is possible that the image was taken to France by King Louis IX and placed in the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. If the theory is true, then the Mandylion was destroyed in 1792 during the French Revolution. Some have claimed that the Mandylion of Genoa is the original, rather than a copy. However, the image is painted and, therefore, not miraculously created.

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See also: *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; Iconoclastic Controversy; *Objects and Artifacts*: Cappadocian Image of Camuliana; *Key Places*: Monastery of Saint Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt)

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Missorium of Theodosius I

The Missorium of Theodosius is a silver plate measuring 29 1/8 inches and weighing roughly 34 pounds. Traces of gilt also remain on the plate. Known as the Madrid Plate, the Missorium was meant to be a decorative piece. It was made to commemorate the 10th year of Theosodius's reign (r. 379–395 CE). In the same year, he married his second wife, Galla, a sister of Valentinian II and member of the family of Constantine I. This marriage helped to legitimize Theodosius's rule, as did the appointment of Valentinian II as coemperor. The imagery was shaped in low relief and depicts the imperial court, along with representations of Earth and its resources. It was likely made in either Constantinople or Thessaloniki and found in Spain in 1847 CE. The plate is now in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid, Spain.

Theodosius, the largest figure, is shown seated on a throne under a palace roof in between his coemperors, his brother-in-law Valentinian II and son Arcadius. Valentinian is the larger of the two, and he holds a scepter and orb. Arcadius holds an orb and gestures with his other hand. These three figures are haloed and dressed in the imperial costume. Accompanying them are four German soldiers and a court official being handed a diptych. This figure may, in fact, be the person to whom the Missorium was given. Two *putti*, or winged cupids, hover above them. Along the bottom, a female lies surrounded by grain and holds a cornucopia. The female figure has been labeled as Terra or Tellus, personifications of Earth, and as Abundantia. She is joined by three other putti carrying fruit; one also holds a flower. An inscription along the edge reads: "D(ominus) N(oster) THEODOSIVS PERPET(uus) AVG(ustus) OB DIEM FELICISSIMVM X." The Latin inscription reads, "Our Lord Theodosius forever Augustus on the most glorious day of the tenth year of his reign." The exact date would have been January 19, 388 CE. A second inscription, on the reverse, states in Greek that the plate weighs 50 Roman pounds.

The Missorium is associated with what is known as *largitio*, a term for imperial gifts made for civilian and military officials. Nineteen examples of silver *largitio* from the Roman period survive, and all of them come from the fourth century CE. Of these, Theodosius's plate is the largest and most elaborate. The office of the *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*, instituted under the reign of Constantine, was responsible for the production of *largitio*. This office was also in charge of issuing coinage, which could also be given as *largitio*. Imperial gifts were made for a variety of occasions, including military victories and the anniversaries of an emperor's reign. Besides officials, regular soldiers also received *largitio*, in the form of a bonus. The practice continued in the Byzantine Empire until the seventh century CE.

Much has been written on the artistic qualities of the plate. It is representative of Theodosian court art, which is characterized by a blending of naturalized and linear elements. The style of the figures resembles that of fifth-century CE Greek art, and some have characterized this borrowing from classical works as a "Theodosian Renaissance." The female figure and *putti* come from classical mythology and recall earlier Roman iconography. The other figures are shown in a typical imperial court scene. The haloed emperors sit on thrones facing forward, an orientation used in future Byzantine art to denote their imperial and divine natures (although that divinity is now linked to the Christian god rather than the pagan pantheon). The status of the emperors is shown through the highly refined details on their clothing called a *chlamys*, a Greek cloak that was incorporated into the emperor's ceremonial dress. Other elements, such as facial features and the placement of figures in the scene, are abstract and symmetrical. The artist did not intend to show Theodosius or his coemperors exactly as they appeared. Instead, the plate focuses on communicating status and power. The design and subject matter are similar to reliefs on Theodosius's Egyptian column in the Hippodrome, and to scenes portrayed on the emperor's column recognizing his successful military campaigns. Other silver plates from the fourth century CE exist and are like the Missorium in design and subject matter. The David Plates, a later example of Byzantine silverwork, also share many of the same characteristics.

The Missorium is cracked in almost even halves, and judging from the marks of a chisel, it was deliberate. Dividing up objects was a widespread practice seen in the silver hordes of barbarian tribes in the West. The owner and date of the plate's burial are undetermined, but the damage suggests that the plate had changed owners, and that it was valued more for its metal than its connection to the emperor. Circumstances of burial for other silver plate *largitio* suggest that they were buried because being linked to the emperor fell out of favor, or due to foreign invasion. The Missorium was found by a laborer in Almendralejo, Spain, in 1847, along with two silver cups. The Real Academia came into possession of the plate, and the object's first study was published in 1849; the fate of the cups is unknown.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Objects and Artifacts*: David Plates; Obelisk of Theodosius I; *Key Places*: Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Nerezi Murals

In the 12th century, the Byzantine Empire was busy asserting itself in the Balkan Peninsula. It was a very important region for resources, commerce, and communication. It was also a contested territory, with conflicts involving Serbia, Hungary, and the Western European powers. Alexius Comnenus I, patron of the church, was a member of the Comnenian Dynasty through his mother, Theodora, a daughter of Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118) and born into the purple. His father was Constantine Angelus. Very little was written about him, but he was a patron of the arts and served his family well. Alexius was granted control (but not ownership) of territory in Macedonia by Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (r. 1118–1180), his cousin, a practice that was used to ensure control and loyalty. Alexius founded the monastery church of Saint Panteleimon in 1164. The church is notable for its five domes, also found on contemporary buildings in Constantinople. The other famous aspect of the church is its collection of well-preserved murals, which were found when the church was cleaned in 1923.

The Nerezi murals are a series of 12th-century frescoes that decorate the interior of the Church of Saint Panteleimon, in Nerezi (modern-day Macedonia). The paintings portray a variety of images, including scenes from the Passion of Christ. Much of the paintings are original to the foundation of the church, and they have been studied as rare surviving examples of Byzantine church art from that period. The primary artist of the murals is unknown, but it is believed that he was trained in Constantinople and was assisted by other artists. He used local materials, including plants and goat's milk, to make the paint.

The murals are essentially a local creation heavily influenced by new developments in Byzantine art. At this time, religious scenes became more natural and emotional. Called *volume style*, this went on to influence Renaissance art in the West. In scenes such as the Deposition, the figures' expressions and bodies are highly emotional, communicating the drama of the event. Another example of this new art style is the Threnos mural, showing Mary grieving for the death of her son, Jesus. The story is found in the Gospels of Nicodemus, and the Nerezi mural is its first known depiction. The Threnos appears to have influenced later works on the same theme, as late and as far away as the Renaissance in Italy. The composition of the scene forces the viewer to focus on Mary and Jesus. It is also connected to the Presentation mural, where Mary holds the infant Jesus in much the same way.

The murals are also important because of the way they reflect 12th-century debates over religion, including the councils held in Constantinople from 1154–1166. Many of the debates concerned the blending of religious and political power. Alexius played a

part in these councils as well, and the murals communicate the emperor's positions on various issues. In this respect, they could be considered propaganda, especially since the work was financially supported by the imperial office. Scenes in the murals mirror the actions carried out in the liturgy, and they appear to have been painted to specifically reflect what happened during a church service. One example of the political influence on the murals is the Kiss of the Apostles, appearing at Nerezi for the first time in conjunction with the Communion. The kiss symbolized peaceful relations between the Eastern and Western churches, following the 1054 schism. Manuel I was focused on this theme because he wanted to reunite the Roman Empire under his rule, both religiously and politically. At Nerezi, the apostles shown kissing are Luke and Andrew, rather than the traditional Peter and Paul. It was changed because Luke and Andrew were particularly important to the region and using them would perhaps make the thought of reunification more palatable.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Church Synods; *Organization and Administration*: Feudalism; *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; *Key Events*: Great Schism; *Military*: Themes

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Obelisk of Theodosius I

The Obelisk of Theodosius I is an Egyptian obelisk standing in what remains of the Hippodrome of Constantinople. The obelisk was erected there by Theodosius I (r. 347–395 CE), on top of a pedestal made in the emperor's honor. It was common for Roman emperors to repurpose Egyptian obelisks for their own imperial monuments, beginning with Emperor Augustus, and the Obelisk of Theodosius I was the last one to be used in such a way.

The obelisk was commissioned by Tuthmosis III (r. 1479–1425 BCE) in recognition of his military success in Syria; an inscription states that the pharaoh led his army across the Euphrates. The obelisk may also have been made in celebration of a *Jubilee*, a festival celebrated every three years starting in the pharaoh's 30th year in power. It was one of a pair of obelisks at the Great Temple at Karnak, near modern-day Luxor in Egypt; the other obelisk was taken to Rome and is now called the Lateran Obelisk. At present, the obelisk's height is 64.96 feet. Roughly one-third of the obelisk has been lost; prior to the lower section breaking off, it was likely about 98 feet tall. This damage may have occurred during the obelisk's relocation, or after it was already in Constantinople.

The obelisk's capstone, or *pyramidion*, is misshapen, and its faces vary in width. Each of the four sides of the obelisk has three elements: a depiction of Tuthmosis III worshipping the god Amun-Re, another of the pharaoh paired with a different Egyptian deity, and an inscription summarizing his accomplishments.

The Obelisk of Theosodius I, originally erected in Karnak by the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmose III in the 15th century BCE, was moved to the Hippodrome in Constantinople by the Roman emperor Theodosius I in 390 CE. Theodosius added a pedestal underneath that features reliefs depicting scenes from his rule, including a group of barbarians surrendering to the emperor. The obelisk still stands in modern-day Istanbul, Turkey. (Allan T. Kohl/Art Images for College Teaching)

There are multiple theories for which emperor moved the obelisk to Alexandria. Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE) and Constantius II (r. 317–361 CE) have both been suggested. Similarly, it may have been brought to Constantinople by either Justinian or Theodosius I. The obelisk was raised in the Hippodrome in 390 CE. It was placed on an eight-foot marble pedestal, with a bronze piece in each corner for stability. Granite pieces were also added for the same purpose. Below the pedestal is a limestone foundation. Inscriptions on the base state that it took about 30 days to complete the project. The governor, Proclus, was also given credit for its completion. Theodosius I incorporated the obelisk into a triumph celebrating his victory against Western Roman Emperor Maximus Magnus in 388 CE. The obelisk was oriented so that the dedication to Tuthmosis III would have faced the emperor when he was present. The obelisk was placed in the physical center of either the track divider, or the Hippodrome itself, and it may have functioned as a sundial. It is possible that the base was constructed to also be a working fountain.

Other Roman circuses were given obelisks in the fourth century. The location was chosen for its importance in public life; circuses were often used for various political and administrative functions, in addition to chariot races. The Hippodrome had a seating capacity of 100,000 and was modeled after the Circus Maximus in Rome. It was the primary location where the emperor was visible to the public. The choice of Constantinople also shows a shift in importance away from Rome.

The images on the pedestal are emblematic of what is known as the Theodosian renaissance, a revival of classical style that mixed detail and abstract design. It was

originally decorated and painted, but those materials have not survived. Each side shows the imperial household in the *kathisma*, the balcony that overlooked the Hippodrome, surrounded by members of the court. The pedestal has two tiers of imagery, separated by abstract panels called *herms*, with differences between the four sides. In the first tier, two sides show members of the general population in the audience. The other two differ, with one showing an audience including performers, and another a group of barbarians offering tribute. The second tier also changes; two sides are episodic depictions of chariot races and the raising of the obelisk, while inscriptions in Latin and Greek are found on the other two. Differences in status are indicated by fashion and artistic detail. All scenes take place within the Hippodrome itself, and they can be read as a single narrative. It is likely that the work was done by multiple artists, possibly from Aphrodisias (modern-day Turkey), a city well-known for its sculptors.

Altogether, the images and text communicate a message of societal order and imperial strength. The images have been studied as sources on contemporary architecture, material culture, and fashion. Some have also attempted to read the figures as accurate portraits, although they are not meant to be exact likenesses. It has been suggested that the choice of subject matter for each side corresponded to the audience viewing it, because seating in the Hippodrome was organized along faction support, age and gender, and economic class. It has been noted that no religious officials appear on the pedestal. The only representation of Christianity is a *labarum*, the emperor's standard bearing the Chi-Rho, included on one side.

The obelisk remained standing after Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453, and it is mentioned in writings by 16th-century travelers to the city. The area was used as a quarry for some time, and in the 17th century the Hippodrome's floor was raised. This led to a part of the pedestal being covered. Excavations began in 1856 and continued until the 1920s. Today, the area in modern-day Istanbul is known as the At Meydani or "Square of Horses."

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; *Objects and Artifacts*: Missorium of Theosodius I; *Key Places*: Egypt; Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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True Cross

Of all the Christian relics attested to in antiquity, the True Cross, upon which Jesus was crucified, was perhaps the most storied and sacred. The cross was found in Jerusalem by Helena, the mother of Constantine I (r. 306–307 CE), who was later canonized. After he took control of the Roman Empire, Constantine sent his mother on a mission to identify sites of importance to Christianity, and to collect relics. She arrived in the Holy Land in 326 CE. In Jerusalem, a Roman temple had been built on the site of Jesus's tomb, and Helena had this demolished. Excavations began, and according to one account, she found three whole crosses buried on the site. Through the working of a miracle, one of them was determined to be the True Cross. In honor of this discovery, Constantine built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there. Helena divided the True Cross between Jerusalem and Constantinople. Egeria, a fourth-century pilgrim, described the annual celebration of the relic, held on September 14. In 614 CE, Jerusalem was captured by the Persians, who took the city's portion of the True Cross to Ctesiphon, their capital. It was eventually recovered by Heraclius (610–641 CE) in either 629 or 630 CE, as part of an arrangement made with Shahrvaraz, the Persian general who was made king.

When Jerusalem was captured by Crusaders in 1099, they had the priests of the Holy Sepulchre tortured into showing them where the True Cross was kept. What the found was a very small fragment encased in a wooden cross. Throughout the Crusader occupation of Jerusalem, this relic was carried by the Latin patriarch at the head of the army of Jerusalem. Other Crusader armies were granted the privilege of carrying it as well. One source compares this use to the role the Ark of the Covenant played for the Israelite army. The True Cross was repeatedly credited with victories, but traditionally it was brought out only when the army was on the defensive. Although it remained in the care of the patriarch, the king of Jerusalem seems to have had greater control over its use, and it helped to legitimize his power, both political and religious. However, it was not the only piece in existence. A source dated to 1109 states that at the time, there were 20 known True Cross fragments.

There are several accounts of the True Cross being present at specific battles or associated with specific individuals. At the Battle of Ager Sanguinis (near Aleppo) in 1119, the Crusader forces, led by Roger of Salerno, carried the relic before them. Although they were soundly defeated, the account of the battle states that some Turkish soldiers died instantly when they tried to touch it. Following this battle, the True Cross frequently accompanied King Baldwin II of Jerusalem. Amalric of Jerusalem supposedly wore another piece of the cross around his neck always, and this was later sent to the abbey at Clairvaux. This transfer of relics throughout Christendom, and particularly to the West, was a widespread phenomenon, and it included pieces of the True Cross. For example, one fragment of the cross was given to Raymond of Saint Gilles, Count of Toulouse, by the Byzantine emperor Alexius I (r. 1081–1118).

At the Battle of Hattin in 1187, Saladin captured the True Cross. The relic was taken to Damascus, where it was displayed upside down. One legend says that

Saladin tried to burn it, but the cross jumped out of the fire. The loss of the relic severely damaged the Crusaders' morale, and it became a focus of negotiations for the next three decades. During the Third Crusade, Crusaders took the city of Acre in 1191. As part of the truce, Saladin was required, along with other concessions, to return the True Cross. However, the agreement fell through. During the siege of Damietta in 1219, it was again offered to the Crusaders as part of the negotiations. The offer was turned down, partially based on the belief that Al-Kamil, the Ayyubid ruler of Egypt, did not have the relic in his possession. This was shown to be accurate two years later. When the Fifth Crusade ended in defeat for the Crusaders, Al-Kamil agreed to give them the True Cross in exchange for their withdrawal. He never did so, and at this point it disappears from history. Today, many relics claim to be pieces of the True Cross, so many that John Calvin once joked that they could fill a ship.

Even after it was captured, the True Cross continued to inspire Christians in the West. For example, the French branch of the Children's Crusade of 1212 presented a letter to King Philip II, asking him to return to the Holy Land, find the relic, and take it to Jerusalem. This order had supposedly come from Jesus himself. Although Philip accepted the message, he did not follow the order.

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See also: *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Constantine the Great; Heraclius; *Key Events*: First Crusade; *Key Places*: Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem); Jerusalem; *Primary Documents:* Document 7

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Veroli Casket

The Veroli casket is a small box made in Constantinople in the late 11th century CE. Caskets of this type are also known as "rosette caskets" because of the rosette border designs. It is named for Veroli, Italy, where it was kept until 1861 CE when it was purchased by John Webb. Although it is called a casket, this object (and others like it) was not used for interring the deceased. Considered the best surviving example of Byzantine ivory caskets, the Veroli casket is covered with scenes from pagan mythology.

Today, it is on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which acquired it in 1865.

The casket is made of wood with ivory and bone panels, and metal for the lock. There are also traces of paint and gilding. It measures 16 by 6.25 by 4.38 inches and weighs 3.79 pounds, and there is no indication of what may have been kept inside. The casket is of a high quality, and it was probably made for a member of the imperial family. A daughter of Constantine VIII (r. 969–1028 CE) has been suggested as the recipient. Byzantine ivory caskets often featured pagan, rather than Christian, motifs. Some of the characteristics of pagan art visible on the Veroli casket are naturalistic human bodies and strong suggestions of movement. Given the fact that it was made after Iconoclasm, the Veroli casket shows that pagan mythology and literature were still valued in Byzantine society, where "pagan" and "nonreligious" were one in the same. Its imagery communicates a message that differed from religious art and iconography. Texts and accompanying illustrations from late antiquity may have served as source material for the artist, including works by Nonnos of Panopolis of the fifth century CE. Variations of the scenes and figures on the casket can be found on many other objects, Byzantine and Roman. Some similar objects may have come from the same artist or workshop.

A few different myths are presented on the Veroli casket. The sliding lid shows the rape of Europa by Zeus on the left, and a figure generally identified as Hercules on the right. Erotes, or winged cherubs, centaurs, and maenads (female worshippers of Dionysus) are located on the back of the casket. In the border are faces in profile that are more typical of religious art. One element, that of a man being stoned, has been borrowed from an illustration on the 10th-century Joshua Roll that shows the execution of the biblical character Achan. The Europa myth is repeated on what is considered the back side of the casket, next to a panel of Erotes and animals. Some have interpreted the back as a procession of Dionysus, or a parody of scenes on the other sides of the

RAPE OF EUROPA

One of the many archaic myths depicted on the Veroli casket is the rape of Europa by the god Zeus. Europa is mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, but her abduction is described in Hesiod's *The Catalogue of Women*. According to Hesiod, Europa was spotted by Zeus while gathering flowers. He transformed himself into a gentle white bull, an animal that she apparently found appealing. Zeus then took her to Crete and "mingled with her." Europa was then given to Asterion, a king of Crete, and she had three sons: Minos, Sarpedon, and Rhadamanthus. Some legends also say that Zeus bestowed upon Europa four valuable gifts. He commissioned a necklace from Hephaestus, the Greek god of metalworking; the bronze man and protector of Crete named Talos; Laelaps, a hunting dog that always caught what it pursued; and a javelin that never missed its mark. Europa married the king of Crete, who adopted her three half-divine sons. Her son Minos became the famous Cretan king who demanded Athenians to pay tribute in the form of sacrifices for his frightful Minotaur—the half-man, half-bull creature that lived in the Labyrinth on Crete. It is also believed that, once their relationship ended, Zeus created the constellation Taurus to commemorate their time together and his superclever disguise.

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casket. On the front, the left side shows a scene with Eros and the figures of a man and woman, whose identities are open to interpretation. On the rest are two separate scenes. The first is Bellerophon and Pegasus, along with a female figure. The second shows Iphigeneia, surrounded by other figures from the Trojan War, being sacrificed. The end panels are also decorated, with one side showing Dionysus and the other a Nereid, or sea nymph. Since the space here is smaller, the elements overlap each other.

Much has been written about the artistic qualities of these panels. The choice to have decorated panels on all sides forces the viewer to engage with the object. As shown by the reference to the biblical story of Achan, the panels include elements that are unique to the myths. The myths are also not shown in their entirety. This has been compared to wall paintings in Byzantine churches that show biblical scenes connected by theme, rather than chronology. The repetition of certain figures has been read as indicating a sequence of events, as well as connecting the panels together. An example is the frequent appearance of Eros, the god of desire, who often motivated action in literature and art. While movement is shown in some places, other scenes are more static. The use of ivory as a medium was itself an important choice. In the ancient world, ivory was a luxury material connected to sleep, deception, and hidden things.

Although Byzantine ivory caskets were popular in the 10th and 11th centuries, it is possible that they continued to be made until 1204, when Constantinople was captured by the Crusaders. By that time, they had already begun to appear in the West. The Veroli casket itself was a very popular art object beginning in the late 19th century, due to greater international exposure, and replicas were made for private collectors. The creation of plaster casts based on the Veroli casket made the process easier. Two replica caskets from that time are in museums in Madrid and Naples. They are generally faithful to the original, although different materials have been used. The artists also made changes to the reliefs, some because of personal taste. There is little documentation on the replicas, so it is not clear exactly when they were made. Some European museums also offered replicas of individual panels as souvenirs. The trend may have continued into the early 20th century.

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See also: *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; *Objects and Artifacts*: Barberini Ivory

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Key Places

OVERVIEW ESSAY

The entries in this section fall into two groups: geographic areas and architectural structures. The former encompasses cities and regions within the imperial domain whose existence was crucial for the history of the Byzantine Empire. The latter includes urban, military, and religious buildings within the realm of emperor, primarily constructed by the initiative of two rulers—Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) and Justinian (r. 527–565 CE).

Cities and Regions

This section introduces two ancient geographical sites whose existence was essential for the history of the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church. Byzantium and Chalcedon were small towns located on two sides of the Bosporus Strait. Byzantium had the honor of becoming the Byzantine capital and giving its name to the empire. Chalcedon rose from a coastal village to an early center of major religious disputes, and its name was adopted for the Orthodox faith—the Chalcedon Creed. Over time, the former grew into one of the world's most significant metropolises, while the latter merely became one of its districts. Egypt and Bulgaria, today independent states, are two regions that make part of this group thanks to their significance for Roman and Byzantine history. Egypt became the prominent province as a land where grain was mostly produced, and as a cradle of both monasticism and Monophysitism. From the seventh century, Bulgaria was an unpredictable neighbor of the Byzantine Empire on the Balkan Peninsula. Sometimes it was a Byzantine ally, sometimes a bitter enemy that imperial forces had to keep under control. Antioch was a city positioned on the eastern border of the empire. It gained its wealth as an important terminus on the trade route from Persia. In its religious life it was known as a seat of the bishop who supervised the Christian churches in Asia Minor and southern Europe. Jerusalem is one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world and the site crucial for three monotheistic religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Urban Structures

In their capital city of Constantinople, the Byzantines had a fundamental duty to possess and to build certain types of urban structures. This was to emphasize the empire's

greatness, to preserve it and protect it. The changing circumstances required them to be constantly rebuilt and reconstructed. The credit for protection of the city go to its massive defense walls—Walls of Theodosius. When the Walls of Constantine failed to encompass the city, the Theodosian ones were built as the most distinctive military structure ever constructed. They guarded the city until the very last moment of the empire. The wall had 10 gates, the Golden Gate the most important and monumental among them. As the empire expanded so did the capital. The growing number of citizens increased demand for goods, and a bigger harbor was needed. The Theodosian Harbor was an enlarged version of the previous port and continued to function until the 12th century. It was especially important as a main port where grain was transported from Egypt.

The glory of the empire required construction of certain urban structures. Their main function was to reflect the emperor's position and power, and to satisfy ceremonial needs. The whole life of the empire was directed from the Great Palace of Constantinople. It served as the residence of the imperial family and functioned as the city's administrative and religious center. It involved many different buildings, from palaces to churches to several forums, including the Forum of Constantine. Part of the complex also included the Hippodrome, a massive structure used for sports events and entertainment as well as for imperial ceremonies. Of all structures that once formed the whole complex, many are barely visible or their remains lay under new buildings.

Religious Monuments

The largest subgroup of the section are seven entries on religious monuments. To proclaim the glory of Christianity as the Byzantine Empire required the construction of numerous religious monuments, in the capital and within the imperial domains. The most distinguished ones were and still are Hagia Sophia and the Church of Holy Apostles in Constantinople, the Church of the Nativity and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy Land, the Monastery of Saint Catharine in Egypt and a group of monasteries in Greece, as well as the Basilica of San Vitale in Italy.

Both Hagia Sophia and the Church of Holy Apostles were first constructed under Constantine and rebuilt on a larger scale during the reign of Justinian. The second Hagia Sophia survived many difficult moments and is known today as a masterpiece of Byzantine architecture. The second structure of the Holy Apostles had a different destiny. We know about its existence and appearance mainly from written sources. The ninth-century Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice is one of the best-known examples of Italo-Byzantine architecture. It was modeled after Constantine's Church of the Holy Apostles and Hagia Sophia.

Two churches in the Holy Land were erected to mark the places where Christ was born, crucified, and died. Constantine's Church of the Nativity was expanded under Justinian. It went through critical periods yet remained intact during the Muslim invasion. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre has long been a major pilgrimage center for Christians all around the world. Once more Constantine built the first church, which had to be rebuilt and restored several times.

The Monastery of Saint Catherine is one of the oldest monastic communities in the world. It is located at the place where God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush. It is also a site where the holy relics of Saint Catherine are enshrined. Mount Athos is a peninsula in Greece settled by small monastic communities that with time grew into a group of 20 monasteries.

The construction of the Basilica of San Vitale begun under the rule of Ostrogoths, but the church was completed after Justinian's forces had reconquered Italy. It stands out for its magnificent golden mosaics portraying Justinian and his wife, Theodora.

All the described religious monuments and urban structures that still exist are mentioned on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list, which explains why they are included in this section.

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Antioch

Located on the Orontes River in what is today southeastern Turkey, Antioch or Antiochia (present-day Antakya) was a Syrian city founded by Seleucus I Nicator (Victor) (r. 305–281 BCE) between 301 and 299 BCE. The western terminus for trade routes connecting the Mediterranean with Persia and points east, Antioch became a wealthy commercial center in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine times.

Syria was a part of the empire established by Alexander the Great (r. 356–323 BCE), the Macedonian king who overthrew the Persian Empire in the fourth century BCE. Alexander had no official successor, so after his death his empire fragmented as various of his generals and commanders fought each other for control. Seleucus, one of

the commanders of Alexander's elite guard, emerged from the decades long Wars of the Successors as ruler of most Alexander's empire, save for Egypt and Greece and Macedon. His great-grandson, Seleucus II (r. 246–225 BCE), eventually made Antioch the capital of the Seleucid state, which lasted until its destruction by the Romans in 64 BCE.

In size and importance, Antioch, now capital of the Roman province of Syria, became the third city of the empire, after Rome itself and Alexandria in Egypt. Due to its position close to Persia, Rome's main rival in the east, the city was the main base for Roman troops in the region. Antioch also has a special place in the development of Christianity. Some scholars believe that it was in Antioch that followers of Christ were first called Christians. The missionary Saint Paul also taught in this area in about 47–55 CE.

The city maintained its status as a capital for a long period. Antioch was a regional center during both the Seleucid and Roman Empires due to its geostrategic location. Being on the crossing of major trade routes made it a prominent economic and cultural hub. Like Alexandria, its main rival in the Eastern Empire, Antioch benefited from Roman rule, becoming a thoroughly Romanized city, noted for its magnificent amphitheater and the elegant Seleucid palaces where Roman emperors vacationed. Antioch was rebuilt by the Roman emperor Trajan (r. 98–117 CE), who made the city the winter quarters for his army. Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE), who won the imperial throne after a period of civil war, punished the city for its support of his Syrian rival, Pescennius Niger, by suppressing its independent city government.

Under Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), who reunited the Eastern and Western Empires under his rule, Antioch became an important Christian center, famous for its school of biblical studies. Julian the Apostate (r. 361–363 CE), the last pagan emperor, crossed Syria on his way to confront the Persians. His forces paused in Antioch, and the city had to offer them accommodation and to provide food. It resulted in a severe crisis marked by both starvation and protests.

In the fourth century CE, Antioch acquired status, both in military and ecclesiastical terms. It achieved an important position in the Roman administration as a seat of government for the eastern provinces. Because the church of Antioch claimed two apostles had founded it, Peter and Paul, its bishops claimed an equal status with the bishops of the other churches that claimed apostolic foundation, such as Jerusalem, Rome, and Alexandria (Constantinople only later claimed such status). The See of Antioch thus became an important political and theological position.

After the periods of prosperity in the fourth and fifth centuries, the sixth century brought a series of disasters that caused permanent damage to the city. In the sixth century CE, Antioch suffered a series of disasters, including earthquakes and fires; in 540 and 611 CE, the city was briefly occupied by the Persians. In the next phase, Antioch became part of the Arab Caliphate in 637 CE, and it dwindled in size and importance. In 969 CE, the Byzantines reconquered the city, which then served as a frontier fortress until the Seljuq Turks captured it in 1084. In 1098, during the First Crusade, Antioch was captured by the Crusaders and thereafter became capital of a Christian principality until conquered and destroyed by the Mamelukes in 1268. This

last catastrophe transformed Antioch into a small village, which the Ottoman Turks captured in 1517. The Ottoman Empire retained possession of it until after World War I, when it became Syrian territory under French control. In 1939, France agreed to unification of the city and surrounding area with Turkey.

Today not much of the ancient city has survived since its remains are covered with alluvial deposits from the Orontes River. In the 20th century, archeological excavations led to important discoveries, such as 300 ancient mosaic pavements and a great number of public and private Roman baths.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Patriarchs; *Organization and Administration*: Market; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; Julian the Apostate; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; Persians; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; Islam, Expansion of; *Objects and Artifacts*: Antioch Chalice

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Bulgaria

Bulgaria is a country occupying the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe. Founded in the second half of the seventh century CE, Bulgaria is one of the oldest states on the European continent. It traditionally intersects roads from Europe to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. As a result, it was a significant point on essential trade routes even before the creation of the Bulgarian state.

Formerly the Bulgars were nomadic people from central Asia. When the union of Bulgar tribes fell apart, some of them were subjugated by Khazars, while Khan (the title of a military ruler) Asparukkh, son of Kovrat, led one branch westward. They reached the Danube around 670 CE and settled in the southeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula, on the territory that first belonged to the Roman and then to the Byzantine Empire. Initially, the Bulgars expelled the Slavs who had settled this area in the sixth century and relocated them to the border regions.

However, the Slavs became significant citizens of the Bulgar state and assimilated with them. The unification of Slavs and Bulgars gave birth to Bulgaria, the first South Slavic state. The Byzantine Empire recognized the First Bulgarian state in 681 CE. At the head of the country stood Khan Asparukh (r. 681–700 CE), and he declared Pliska the capital of the newly found state. In the early eighth century, until 721 CE, Bulgaria

was under the rule of Khan Tervel (r. 700–721 CE), Asparukh's son, who proved himself a skilled tactician. He managed to eliminate the Khazar Khanate, annihilate the Arab hordes during the siege of Constantinople, and expand the borders of Bulgaria. Great stability marked the period after Tervel's rule. The political situation improved when Khan Krum (r. 803–814 CE) came to power. He succeeded in not only defeating the Byzantines but in also killing Emperor Nicephorus I (r. 802–811 CE).

Krum died in 813 CE in the middle of his preparations to conquer Constantinople. The Bulgarian rules in the first half of the ninth century were not favorable to Christians. However, Bulgaria officially adopted Christianity during the reign of Prince Boris I Mihail (r. 852–899 CE). This way the ethnic differences between the Bulgars and Slavs almost ceased to exist, and it cleared a path to unification of the Bulgarian peoples. The end of the century brought the creation of Cyrillic alphabet, which was the work of Slavic brothers Cyril and Methodius, missionaries whom the Bulgarians sent to this region. Their disciples Clement and Nahum followed them to Bulgaria and developed rich education and literary activity. They were warmly welcomed in the state, so they successfully spread the Cyrillic alphabet to other Slavic countries, such as Serbia and Russia. Ohrid and Pliska became centers of Bulgarian and Slavic culture.

The golden age for the Bulgarian state was the reign of Czar Simeon I (r. 893–927 CE). It was a period of cultural flourishing and territorial expansion. At this time, the country's borders extended to the Black, White, and Aegean Seas. Simeon abandoned the pagan city of Pliska, capital of the country, and moved it to Christian Preslav. The rule of son Peter (r. 927–969 CE) allowed economic, cultural, and religious growth to continue.

Bulgaria faced severe threats from the Byzantines in the 10th century. First, in 972 CE, the eastern part of Bulgaria fell under the Byzantine Empire, during the rule of Boris II (r. 969–977 CE), the Bulgarian khan. Then, in 1018 CE, after prolonged wars, the Byzantines conquered Bulgaria, which became an imperial province. The domination by the Byzantine Empire ended after an uprising of the boyars (members of the highest rank of the feudal Bulgarian aristocracy).

In 1186/1187, led by brothers Assen and Peter, they found the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, and Tarnovo became its capital. The Bulgarians signed a peace treaty with the Byzantines, forcing the latter to recognize Bulgaria as an independent kingdom. As a result, Bulgaria regained its former power during the reigns of Assen and Peter's younger brothers—Czar Kaloyan (r. 1197–1207) and Czar Ivan Assen II (r. 1218–1241). The rule of Ivan Assen II represents the peak of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom: it established its political power in southeast Europe, expanding its borders to the Black, Aegean, and Adriatic Seas and causing a virtual economic and cultural renaissance.

Unfortunately, the period of flourishing did not last long. In the next phase, the Bulgarian state faced severe economic and political problems. Internal dissent followed the threats of Tatars and Ottomans. After defeats of Christian forces at the battles of Kosovo and Nicopolis, in 1389 and 1396, respectively, the Bulgarian Empire fell to Murad II (r. 1421–1444; 1446–1451). Five centuries of Ottoman domination followed the conquest. During this time, Orthodox monasteries became spiritual centers whose duty was to take care of Bulgarian culture and religion. They existed before the arrival

of the Ottomans, and they suffered varying fates during the period of their rule, often being destroyed and then reconstructed. Through it all, they continue their spiritual work to the present day.

The April Uprising in 1876 was the Bulgarians' largest and most organized attempt to free themselves of Ottoman domination. Although the Ottomans suppressed the revolt with great brutality, it pushed the Bulgarian national issue to the center of international politics. This led to the restoration of the Bulgarian state in 1878, when the war between Turkey and Russia ended.

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See also: *Individuals*: Methodius and Cyril, Apostles of the Slavs; *Groups and Organizations*: Avars; Bulgars; Khazars; Slavs; *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; *Key Places*: Mount Athos (Greece)

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Byzantium

In 657 BCE, settlers from the Greek city of Megara founded a new colony named Byzantium on the western shore of the Bosporus, a narrow strait that connects the Sea of Marmara with the Black Sea. Although the Megarians had founded another colony, Chalcedon, on the eastern shore of the strait in about 685 BCE, the western shore was considered better suited for both farming and fishing. Throughout history, the region remained essential to the Greeks and Persians, as well as the Romans, because of its strategic position. The town, which controlled the entrance to the Black Sea, was a naturally fortified site surrounded by water and provided with two harbors, including a deep natural estuary known as the Golden Horn, which connected it to the Bosporus and limited any possibility of attack by land to the European side.

According to the legend, on the advice of the Delphic Oracle, King Byzas established the colony in 658 BCE and populated it with his followers. While the origin of the immigrants cannot be confirmed, evidence such as the alphabet, the names of Byzantine institutions, calendar, and cults establishes Megara as the place of their ancestry.

Undoubtedly, the city's strategic location was the main reason it first attracted the attention of the Greeks and Persians. Byzantium initially supported the Persian ruler Darius I (r. 522–486 BCE), even sending him ships during his campaign against the

Scythians. However, in 513 BCE, Darius destroyed the town and incorporated the entire region into the Persian Empire. During the Ionian Revolt (499–493 BCE), when the Greek cities of Asia Minor sought to throw off Persian domination, the Greeks briefly retook Byzantium, but the site quickly reverted to Persian control, and many of the remaining inhabitants of Byzantium and Chalcedon fled the area. In about 479 BCE, Pausanias, a Spartan general who had commanded Greek forces against the Persians at the Battle of Plataea, took control of Byzantium. Because of the continuing strength of the Persians in the region, Pausanias made peace with their king, Xerxes (486–465 BCE), who recognized him as governor of the town. Adopting Persian dress and customs, Pausanias continued as governor until he was recalled to Sparta in about 470 BCE.

While fighting each other during the long Peloponnesian War (434–404 BCE), the Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta both sought to control Byzantium—Athens to maintain the vital Black Sea grain trade and Sparta to deny Athens that trade. Initially a member of the Delian League and thus an ally of Athens, Byzantium became an ally of Sparta in 411 BCE when the tide of war turned against Athens. This change in allegiance allowed Sparta to quickly stop shipments of grain to Athens and led to the final defeat of Athens. In the following decades, the city remained under Spartan dominance and was forced to seek the help of Sparta whenever in danger, or to change sides when the dominance and power of Sparta ended.

After the reconstitution of the Delian League in 377 BCE, Byzantium rejoined the Athenian alliance and remained a member until the Social War (357–355 BCE) finally ended Athenian dominance in Greece. With the demise of the Delian League, King Philip II of Macedonia (r. 359–336 BCE) besieged Byzantium in 340 BCE but withdrew in the face of a threatened Persian intervention. Philip's son, Alexander the Great (r. 336–323 BCE), took control of the city when he crossed the strait into Asia Minor at the beginning of his campaign against the Persians. Upon Alexander's death in 323 BCE, his empire fragmented as his generals and commanders fought for control. The ensuing chaos allowed Byzantium to regain both its independence and its control of regional trade. However, when the Galatian tribes began moving into Asia Minor from Europe in the 270s BCE, Byzantium paid them tribute. Attempting to recoup these payments, Byzantium demanded money from ships of Rhodes seeking to use the Bosporus. The Rhodians successfully attacked the city in 220 BCE, forcing the Byzantines to drop their demands.

In the second century CE, Byzantium sided with the Roman Empire and allowed its forces to stop there before campaigns in Asia Minor. For Rome, the income the city derived from tribute or fishing was financially significant. When Emperor Commodus (r. 180–192 CE) was killed in 192 CE, uncertainty about succession caused a civil war. When Byzantium supported the Syrian legate, Pescennius Niger, against the ultimate victor, Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE), the new emperor destroyed the city, though he rebuilt it later.

Emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) divided the Roman Empire in the late third century CE. It was eventually reunited under the rule of one man by Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), who decided to move his capital from Rome to the east after

the defeat of eastern rival Licinius (r. 308–324 CE) at the Battle of Chrysopolis in 324 CE. In 324 CE, Constantine chose the site of ancient Byzantium as his new capital city, which was renamed Constantinople in his honor. It quickly became the cultural and economic center of the Later Roman or Byzantine Empire.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; *Groups and Organizations*: Persians; *Key Places*: Chalcedon

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Chalcedon

Settlers from the Greek city of Megara established a colony on the Asian shore of the Bosporus, the strait connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, in about 685 BCE. Today known as Kadikoy, one of the eastern districts of the modern Turkish city of Istanbul, Chalcedon was an important Byzantine city in the fourth and fifth centuries CE, when it was the site of several famous ecumenical councils of the Christian church.

Situated opposite of Byzantium, a later Megarian colony on the European side of the Bosporus that became the site of Constantinople in 324 CE, Chalcedon had a settlement history that dated back to 5500 BCE. Archaeologists have found numerous artifacts at the site that prove continuous occupation by humans from prehistoric times to the Bronze Age, when there is evidence of a Phoenician port at the site. In the early 5th century BCE, the city was dominated by the Persians. During the Peloponnesian War in the late 5th century BCE, Chalcedon, like Byzantium, was first an ally of Athens and then, after a decline in Athenian military fortunes, an ally of Sparta. The city and the region were important to both sides because the Bosporus controlled access to the Black Sea grain trade. Chalcedon became part of the empire of Alexander the Great in the 330s BCE, and following the political splintering of the empire after Alexander's death in 323 BCE, eventually became part of the kingdom of Pergamum. In 133 BCE, the last king of Pergamum bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, beginning Chalcedon's long history as a Roman/Byzantine city. In the 7th century CE, Chalcedon fell to both the Persians and the Arabs and was heavily damaged during the fourth Crusade in the early 13th century. The Byzantines permanently lost the city to the Ottoman Turks in 1353, a century before the fall of Constantinople. As a

result, the oldest mosque in modern Istanbul is located in the city district that was Chalcedon.

In 361 CE, Emperor Julian the Apostate (r. 361–363 CE), a pagan, established a tribunal in Chalcedon for the trial and condemnation of his opponents. Julian's friend Secundus Salutius presided over the court and was later appointed as praetorian prefect of the East. In 451 CE, the Council of Chalcedon, the fourth ecumenical council of the Christian Church, convened in the city. Called by Empress Pulcheria and Emperor Marcian (r. 582–602 CE), the council sought to resolve various theological controversies that were threatening the unity of the church. The most important question of the time was Christological—was Jesus fully human, fully divine, or both? The Monophysites asserted that Christ had only one divine nature. The Council of Chalcedon, however, declared that Christ had a distinct human nature and a distinct divine nature, both of which existed fully within him. This pronouncement became Christian orthodoxy, and all opposing positions became heresies.

At the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Chalcedon was a small town and no longer of great political or military significance. Renamed Kadikoy, meaning "Village of the Judge," the district became a market center and then a residential area, since its location allowed its residents easy access to Istanbul by water. Today, Kadikoy has a mixed population of Turks, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, and Christian churches of various denominations, as well as Jewish synagogues, can be found in the district.

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See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Monophysites; Persians; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; Fourth Crusade; Persia, Wars with; *Key Places*: Byzantium

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Church of San Vitale (Ravenna, Italy)

The church of San Vitale, also called the Basilica of San Vitale, is a sixth-century CE church in Ravenna, Italy, that represents a masterpiece of Byzantine architecture and art. It is famous for its magnificent mosaics of Christian iconography decorating the interior walls and ceilings.

Ecclesius, bishop of Ravenna, initiated construction of the San Vitale Basilica, one year after his trip to the Byzantine Empire with Pope John I in 525 CE. At that time, the Ostrogoths ruled Ravenna, and in 526 CE Queen Amalasuntha (died 535 CE) succeeded her father, King Theodoric the Great (r. 475–526 CE). In 540 CE,

the great Byzantine general Belisarius occupied the city and subsequently established it as an imperial exarchate (a Byzantine province located in northern Italy and ruled by a governor called an exarch). Thus, the basilica begun under the Goths reached its completion under Byzantine rule. Maximian, the first archbishop of Ravenna, consecrated it in 548 CE and dedicated it to the martyr Vitalis, the patron saint of Ravenna.

The funder of the church was possibly a wealthy private banker from Ravenna called Julianus Argentarius. Construction of the basilica began in 526 CE on the site of the martyrdom of Saint Vitalis and incorporated a preexisting fifth-century CE shrine dedicated to the martyr. Almost all that remains today, including the splendid colorful mosaics, dates from this early period. What makes this church unique is an authentic atmosphere of antiquity created by its Byzantine interior.

San Vitale is a small domed church that has an octagonal plan, with a two-story ambulatory (walkway or aisle) enclosing a central space beneath a great cupola or dome-like roof. The octagonal structure is made of marble, being crowned by a terra-cotta dome. To the west side there is attached a narthex, or large entrance porch, while a small choir and apse extend to the east.

The mosaic art in the church of San Vitale appears most prominently around the presbytery, the area between the choir and the altar, and the apse, the area of the church containing the altar. Notably, the ceilings of the choir and apse glitter with magnificent mosaics in green and gold. Similar work at Constantinople possibly influenced the famous mosaics, or their celebrated master probably studied his art in the

The Church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, was consecrated in 547 CE, while the city was under control of the Byzantine Empire. The emperor Justinian I completed the conquest of southern Italy several years prior, and Ravenna served as the seat of the exarchate. The church's architecture is a unique blend of Roman and Byzantine styles. Justinian I and his wife, the empress Theodora, were honored with mosaic portraits. (Vvoevale/Dreamstime.com)

Byzantine capital. The identity of the master mosaicist remains a mystery, just as the architect of the church building itself is unknown. The mosaics depict Old and New Testament figures as well as contemporary Byzantine rulers and Catholic ecclesiastics. The presbytery's ceiling and apse draw attention to the mosaics. The former depicts the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) surrounded by plants and animals. The latter illustrates Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) and his wife, Theodora, on panels near the apse.

The mosaics in the apse of San Vitale date to the earliest period, from 526 to 547 CE. A large symbolic image of the Theophany (appearance of God) occupies the central position in the apse. The scene depicts Christ the Redeemer, young and beardless, sitting on the blue sphere of the world. Standing at his sides are Saint Vitale, two angels, and Bishop Ecclesius, founder of the church. Following the Iconoclastic tradition, a mosaic of Saint Vitale himself appears receiving the martyr's crown from the hand of Christ, while Bishop Ecclesius is offering Christ a model of the church.

The most famous mosaics are at the foot of the apse side walls. The left wall has a mosaic of Justinian and his entourage. A halo of glory, which is a sign of the divine

GOLD IN BYZANTINE MOSAIC ART

Fabulous mosaics from the fifth and sixth centuries can still be seen in the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna. Mosaic work is as ancient art form, although its complex technique represents an artistic expression of a highly cultured environment. With the triumph of Christianity, wall mosaics became the only form of decoration in churches and sacred buildings. When Emperor Constantine in 330 CE transferred the imperial seat to Byzantium, Roman and Greek artists were granted tax exemptions, which allowed the mosaic art form to quickly evolve into a great school. Contact with Byzantine painting made mosaics dominant in Roman artistic circles and guided their development within the Christian universe.

Particularly valuable are the chromatic nuances and the glitter of gold used on a vast scale to form a truly stunning backcloth on which figures and objects stand out. The texture of the work is fragmented by thousands of miniature glazed cubes of different sizes and facets that create endless chromatic variations. The effect becomes extraordinary when the representation regains its unity of composition when viewed from a distance.

The technique for gilding tesserae (small blocks of stone, glass, or tile) consisted of the cold application of very fine gold leaf to a sheet of plain or lightly tinted glass about 8 millimeters thick. Covered with a layer of powdered glass, then fired, the final product was ideal for producing color effects. This is due to the unevenness of the powdered glass and the overall thickness, which created variations in tone and enabled gold to be used on very large areas. While in other types of painting the colors are often affected by darkening, fading, or mold, gilded and glazed mosaics have the great advantage of retaining their original tones.

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origin of imperial power, surrounds the emperor. Justinian occupies the central position in the mosaic. He wears an imperial robe in purple and holds a large gold paten, the plate that serves the bread (symbolic body of Christ) during Mass. At his left side is Archbishop Maximian who carries a jeweled cross. On the right wall, Empress Theodora stands with her court. She holds a cup of communion corresponding to the paten. Her robe has a small embroidery with Three Wise Men. This detail is an association with the biblical kings, very common to Christian rulers. Generally, the composition stresses the position of the emperor and the empress as head of both state and church.

The grand arch at the beginning of the rectory has a mosaic displaying images of a bearded Christ on large medallions, the Twelve Apostles, and two saints recognized as Gervasius and Protasius, twin sons of Saint Vitalis. Physically the apostles are represented in a different manner, particularly in their hairstyles. Two dolphins with intertwined tails surround these medallions, while crosses and globes complement this scene.

Extraordinary mosaics decorate the walls and ceilings of the presbytery entirely. Plants and animals form their background, and the mosaic scenes themselves correspond to the Eucharist service conducted at the high altar. The mosaics on the presbytery vault are blue, green, and gold and have small animals along with vine leaves and tendrils. Four sections divide the vault itself, each with a standing angel in a white robe. Together they hold the Lamb of God inside the wreath. The New Testament Jesus sometimes refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

The church was in possession of the Benedictine monastic order for almost 800 years, from the 10th to the 18th centuries. During that period, several additions and changes of the original structure occurred. In the 19th and 20th centuries, some of the additions were eliminated and the exterior of the basilica restored.

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See also: *Individuals*: Belisarius; Justinian; Theodora; *Key Events*: Golden Age (Reign of Justinian I); Justinian I, Reconquest of the West; *Objects and Artifacts*: Hagia Sophia Mosaics

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Church of the Holy Apostles (Constantinople)

The Church of Holy Apostles was the second most important and probably second largest church after Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The church was situated on the fourth hill inside the Constantinian Walls of the city. It was erected immediately west of, and adjoining to, the rotunda mausoleum of Constantine the Great (336 CE), and therefore sometimes mistakenly attributed to him. The church was probably consecrated under Constantius II (r. 337–361 CE) or even later, in 370 CE. In the sixth century during the rule of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), the church was completely rebuilt on a larger scale, leaving Constantine's mausoleum intact and adding a second cruciform mausoleum. The mausoleums and the church were used for imperial burials until 1028, Constantine VIII (r. 1025–1028) being the last emperor buried there.

Not much evidence is available for the church from the fourth century. Concerning its exact date of consecration and its function, there is a dispute among scholars. The situation is even more complicated because of contradictory written sources. It is believed that Constantius II translated the remains of Saint Timotheus and of the Apostles Andrew and Luke there in 356/357 CE. Therefore, it is assumed that the porphyry sarcophagus of Constantine the Great was to be positioned in the church representing the 13th apostle. Its large cruciform (shape of a cross) structure probably resembled some other major churches from the same period in both the East and in Italy. The church historian Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (Palestine) described this first church as taking the form of the cross with a large drum on the crossing. The drum was well illuminated with windows and finished with a conical roof. The church was positioned centrally in the courtyard, surrounded by halls and baths. The interior was decorated with marble and ceilings in gold.

The Justinian church was dedicated on June 28, 550 CE, on the eve of the Feast of the Prince of the Apostles, as described by the emperor's historian, Procopius. This second church followed the cruciform plan of its predecessor, with an elevation of five domes, one over each "arm" of the layout, and the fifth one over the crossing, where the altar was placed. There was an atrium or open-roofed entrance hall that prolonged the west arm, which was thus extending longer than the other three. Inside, an internal colonnade was running parallel to the church's cruciform plan, and all arms had galleries. The central dome was on a drum, a circular or polygonal wall that supported it, with windows, and it stood higher than the other four domes of the church supported on four piers. The church was rebuilt under Basil I (867–886 CE), but its plan probably remained the same. It is presumed that the building depicted in the "Menologion" of Basil II (r. 976–1025) (illuminated church calendar) is the same as the Justinian church.

The church, also known as Apostoleion, played an important role in state rituals. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus's (r. 913–959 CE) work on imperial ceremony, *De cerimoniis*, names the Holy Apostles as a defined point along the processional route that began at the Golden Gate. There is evidence of repairs to the church in the 9th century from the *Vita Basilii* (*Life of Basil*), with descriptions of Basil I strengthening

the church with buttresses and reconstructing damaged sections. The church was probably decorated with a cycle of mosaics between 931 and 944 CE. This is partly described by Constantine of Rhodes in his poem on public monuments from around 940 CE. A later account by Nicolas Mesarites, written between 1198 and 1203 while he was *skeuophylax* (cleric appointed to take care of sacred valuables and liturgical vessels) of the churches of the Great Palace, presents differences that indicate further redecoration, probably from the time after the 10th century. Mesarites also describes the marble revetment, an ornamental facing on masonry walls, and the opus sectile pavements executed in a technique where pieces of marble or other materials were cut to specific shapes of a design and fitted together. The altar, under the central dome at the crossing, was beneath a pyramidal canopy. To its east was a *synthronon* (bench for the clergy), which had probably survived from the Justinian period of the structure. The church may have suffered damages during the capture of the city by the Crusades in 1204. The latest account giving details of the building is from the 15th century.

After the Ottoman conquest in 1453, the church was assigned as the seat of the patriarchate, but after identified as unsuitable, it was moved to the Church of the Virgin Pammakaristos (Virgin All-blessed). The Ottoman mosque of Fatih Camii ("the mosque of the conqueror"), along with its imaret (public kitchen), was built on the site by Mehmed II in 1463. After having suffered damages from an earthquake of 1766, it was rebuilt by Mustafa III.

In absence of physical evidence of the Holy Apostles, several reconstructions of the church and mausolea have been attempted based on descriptions in the written sources. There are a few depictions in manuscripts and comparison with other structures that copied the Holy Apostles, such as the church of Saint John in Ephesus and of Saint Mark in Venice.

Actual remains of the church have been long considered lost, except for some fragmentary pieces found in the mosque courtyard. Byzantine columns were reused in the mosque and nearby Ottoman buildings, an underground colonnaded cistern in the north of the Ottoman precinct, and the imperial sarcophagi. However, in 2001, Fatih Camii was examined as well as the surrounding site. The researchers found evidence of a very large structure that dates earlier than the surviving portions of the original mosque from the 15th century CE. This structure, apparently cruciform in plan, can be identified by courses of light whitish-gray limestone ashlar blocks (blocks precisely cut on all faces with very thin joints) that are clearly more eroded than the stonework above them. The blocks are visibly dated to the period before and have no structural purpose in the structure from the 15th century. Therefore, they might belong to the Byzantine church of Holy Apostles that previously occupied the site and the reconstruction of a structure could be made.

The dimensions are around 57 meters wide and 38 meters long, with transepts around 35 meters long and projecting around 6.5 meters. This leads to the conclusion that the ground plan of the building would be cruciform, but not arranged in a Greek cross pattern as proposed in earlier reconstruction. Further reconstruction of the church, with a western narthex and side porticoes, would give a plan closer to those of Saint John's in Ephesus and Saint Mark's in Venice, the two churches that are known

to have been modeled on the Church of the Holy Apostles. If the findings from 2001 are indeed the remains of Justinian's Church of the Holy Apostles, they could provide a solid basis for reconstruction of the church, which was long considered lost beyond recovery.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; *Key Places*: Golden Gate (Constantinople); Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Saint Mark's Basilica (Venice)

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Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem)

Jesus of Nazareth was crucified in Jerusalem in about 30 CE. The gospels call the place of his execution Calvary and state that he was buried in a nearby tomb. In 66 CE, the Christian community fled Jerusalem at the start of the Jewish uprising against Roman rule. In 70 CE, the Romans crushed the revolt and destroyed both the temple and the city. Because of this catastrophe and further disorders over the following centuries, knowledge of the actual sites of the crucifixion and resurrection were lost. But in the 4th century CE, during the rule of Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), a site in the northwest quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem was identified as the place where Jesus died and was buried. Christian churches have stood on the site since the 330s CE, but the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which purports to encompass both Calvary and the tomb, was largely constructed at the start of the 19th century.

After the rediscovery of the Holy Places of Christianity by Helena, the mother of Constantine, during her visit to the Holy Land in 326 CE, these sites immediately became the focus of Christian veneration. Constantine built the church that was dedicated about 336 CE. The original church was not one building, but a complex of four structures. The whole complex faced the main street of Jerusalem and was entered through a monumental triple gateway that led to a colonnaded courtyard. Beyond were a large basilica with five aisles and a central western apse enclosing the crypt of Saint Helena—the underground cave where she discovered the True Cross. A door at the end of the basilica led into a second colonnaded rectangular court. The rock of Golgotha, or Calvary, was situated in the southeastern corner, and the northeastern corner comprised the grotto, known as the Prison of Christ. Attached to the western

side of the courtyard was a semicircular structure, the so-called Anastasis ("Resurrection" in Greek) Rotunda, built between 325 and 337 CE. In the center of the rotunda was the tomb of Christ, contained within a small shrine. The rotunda consisted of a massive exterior wall and contained three small apses at the cardinal points. The residence of the patriarch of Jerusalem completed the complex, which maintained this form until its destruction in 1009 CE.

Scholars generally agree on the outlines of the fourth-century plan. The main elements of the complex—rotunda, courtyard, and basilica—were all common types in religious architecture. The rotunda enclosed the tomb, which has its direct precedents in royal and imperial mausolea. But the combination was unusual: a rotunda was attached to a basilica through a courtyard.

In the interior was a two-story circular colonnade, forming an ambulatory (walkway) around the sepulchre. The structure may originally have been without a roof, but it was certainly covered by the late 300s CE. The wooden roof and the whole were, according to Eusebius of Caesarea, bishop and historian from the fourth century CE, magnificently decorated. It was made in marble and covered with a coffered ceiling (with sunken panels) painted in gold. The Constantinian outer wall survived, but the internal columns, although placed in their original position, were replaced. In front of the rotunda was a stone-paved courtyard, surrounded by a colonnaded walkway.

The church was burned in the Persian campaign of 614 CE but reconstructed by Modestus, abbot of the monastery of Saint Theodosius in Bethlehem, who later became patriarch of Jerusalem. The emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) did some renovation as well when he retook Jerusalem in 629 CE and returned the True Cross to the church in 630 CE. In 1009, Caliph al-Ḥakim Bi-Amr Allih destroyed the church again, but Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus (r. 1042–1055) rebuilt it in the mid-11th century. The emperor constructed a series of small chapels on the site. The period of the Crusades was turbulent for the whole complex. Crusaders significantly renovated the church in the 12th century. The gateway and basilica were not rebuilt; instead the Anastasis Rotunda became the center of attention in the reconstruction. Multiplication of sites associated with events of the Christ's Passion caused numerous chapels to be added. Simultaneously, the number of relics of the Passion increased and chapels were needed to house them. The Romanesque Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre encompassed the sites of Golgotha and the Anastasis in a single building. Since the Middle Ages, the church has undergone frequent repair and restoration. The current building was completed around 1810 and is partially controlled by various Christian denominations, which regularly conduct services within it.

The church is also venerated as the place where Saint Helena found what she believed to be the actual cross upon which Christ was crucified. To honor her achievement, the crusaders constructed the Chapel of Saint Helena, which today stands above the Chapel of the Finding of the True Cross, which supposedly marks the place where Helena found the holy relic. The most visited site in the church is the Altar of the Crucifixion, upon which is the glass-encased Rock of Calvary, the spot on which the cross of Christ is believed to have been raised.

In 2016, the Aedicule, the shrine that encloses the tomb site, was renovated and the tomb, which had been closed for centuries, was opened. Previous archaeological studies indicated that the tomb dated to the crusader period, but samples of mortar taken in 2016 suggested that an even earlier shrine had once existed on the site. It also confirmed the chronological order of rebuilding on the site.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; Persians; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; Islam, Expansion of; *Objects and Artifacts*: True Cross; *Key Places*: Church of the Nativity (Bethlehem); Jerusalem

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Church of the Nativity (Bethlehem)

The Church of the Nativity is the oldest and one of the most important sacred sites of Christian worship in the world. The church is believed to encompass the place where Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was born over two millennia ago. The church is located in the city of Bethlehem, which is today part of the West Bank, a territory between Israel and Jordan that has been occupied by Israel since 1967 but administered by the Palestinian Authority since 1995. The Church of the Nativity is a basilica, meaning it holds a special status granted by the pope to certain old or important Catholic churches; the designation carries with it certain ceremonial privileges and rights.

Although the gospel birth narratives place the nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem, the exact site is unknown, having likely been lost during the political turmoil that engulfed Palestine during the two centuries following the outbreak of the Jewish Revolt in 66 CE and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 CE. However, by the early fourth century CE, tradition placed the birth at the site now occupied by the Church of the Nativity. Accepting these traditions, Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), commissioned the construction of a church over the grotto identified to her as the birth site in 327 CE. Completed in the 330s CE, this structure stood until it was destroyed by fire in the sixth century CE. Emperor

The Church of the Nativity, located in Bethlehem (now in the West Bank), is a sixth-century Romanesque basilica built during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Justinian I. The structure, which replaced an earlier church from the time of Constantine I, is built over a grotto believed to be the location of Jesus's birth. (Natalia Volkova/Dreamstime.com)

Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) rebuilt the church in 565 CE; the new structure followed the architectural style of the Constantinian church.

When the Persians captured Jerusalem from the Byzantines in 614 CE, they did much damage to Christian sites but did not harm the church. Legend states that the Persian commander, moved by depictions on the church walls of the three magi wearing Persian dress, ordered that the church be spared. When Christian crusaders recaptured Jerusalem in 1099 during the First Crusade, they renovated and redecorated the Church of the Nativity, which for a time served as the coronation site for the Latin kings of Jerusalem. The Muslim leader Saladin captured Bethlehem in 1187 but agreed to the residence of a few Latin and Greek Orthodox clergymen at the church to maintain it for pilgrims. Bethlehem returned briefly to Christian control in the 13th century but was recaptured in 1244 by the Khwarezmian Turks, who severely damaged the Church of the Nativity. By the 14th century, both Latin and Greek Orthodox clergy shared oversight of the church, an arrangement that continued over the centuries under the rule of successive Muslim regimes. In the 15th century, various European states, including England, Burgundy, and Venice, cooperated in rebuilding and restoring the dilapidated church structure.

From 1517 to 1918, Bethlehem was part of the Muslim Ottoman Empire, but management of the Church of the Nativity was vested in representatives of various Christian denominations operating under the *Status Quo*, a series of agreements and protocols governing the oversight of Christian sites in the Holy Land that dated back to

the 18th century. Today, use, oversight, and maintenance of the Church of the Nativity belongs jointly to the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Armenian Apostolic Churches, each of which holds certain properties at the site and is responsible for certain maintenance duties. Each denomination also conducts a regular schedule of services at the church. Some other Christian groups, such as the Copts and the Syriac Orthodox Christians, also have certain defined rights of worship at the church.

The current Church of the Nativity complex comprises the Grotto of the Nativity, which encompasses the cave that was the traditional site of Christ's birth identified for Helena in the fourth century CE. A niche in the cave contains the Altar of the Nativity, which covers a 14-point silver star, placed at the site in 1717, and designating the exact place of Christ's birth. The Church of the Nativity itself is connected to the Grotto shrine, and the Church of Saint Catherine, a Roman Catholic church, is located just to the north. Manger Square, Bethlehem's main square, is an extension of the paved courtyard that runs across the front of the Church of the Nativity and the Church of Saint Catherine. Pilgrims from around the world gather in this square at Christmas to sing carols and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; *Groups and Organizations*: Franks; Muslims; Persians; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; Islam, Expansion of; *Key Places*: Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem); Jerusalem

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Egypt

Modern Egypt is a Mediterranean country positioned on two continents. Most of its territory extends to the northeast corner of Africa, while some parts spread to the southwest angle of Arabia, being connected by the Sinai Peninsula. For almost 30 centuries—from the unification of the Lower and Upper Egypt around 3100 BCE to its conquest by Alexander the Great (333–323 BCE) in 332 BCE—ancient Egypt was the preeminent civilization in the Mediterranean world. More than six centuries of Roman/Byzantine rule in Egypt began in 30 BCE. Governed directly by the emperor, Egypt became an important province because its grain surplus fed the city of Rome.

Assuming the title of pharaoh, the Roman emperors associated themselves with the claims of divinity made by Egyptian rules of centuries. Rome enabled the native clergy to retain their rights and privileges, thus putting native religion under imperial control. The centralized Roman government in Egypt commanded significant military

resources and thus was capable of securing internal order and providing protection from plundering nomads. The Roman administration possessed both a complex bureaucracy and a caste system. The Hellenized population in the towns was in a privileged position in comparison with the rural native Egyptian community. Rome exploited Egypt for the profit of its rulers, causing direct economic and social deterioration. Most of the Egyptian grain harvest was shipped to Rome, either as rent paid by imperial tenants or as taxes paid by Egyptian landholders. This flow of wealth from Egypt to Rome damaged the Egyptian economy.

In the first century CE, the spread of Christianity impacted life in Egypt, just as it did in Rome and the rest of the eastern Mediterranean. The new religion expanded rapidly from Alexandria, and by the second century CE, it had already infiltrated Upper Egypt. Christian tradition relates that Saint Mark carried Christianity to Egypt in 37 CE and founded the church of Alexandria in 40 CE. Egyptian Christians are known as Copts, a term derived from the Greek *Aegyptos*, meaning Egypt. In their language, the Copts referred to themselves as the people who inhabited Egypt, which gave the term "Copt" an ethnic rather than a religious connotation. Additionally, the Egyptian deserts are known as the birthplace of Christian monasticism.

The third-century difficulties in the Roman Empire influenced the administration of Egypt significantly. The malfunction of a Roman bureaucracy, consequences of the Roman civil wars, and clash between pretenders to imperial power all disturbed stability in Egypt. Roman power revived during the reign of Diocletian, who introduced a series of political, fiscal, and administrative reforms. The most important of these was establishment of the Tetrarchy, which was a division of the empire into eastern and western parts. Under his rule, Egypt was transformed from one into three provinces and lost its administrative integrity. Diocletian also launched a violent persecution against Christians, whom he saw as threats to the Roman state because they eroded the unifying power of the old Roman civil religion.

Earlier emperors had also viewed Christianity as detrimental to the Roman state. In 202 CE, Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE) outlawed conversion to Christianity and abolished the influential Christian School in Alexandria. In 303 CE, Diocletian ordered the destruction of Christian churches and writings and enslaved many lay Christians. The three-year period of state persecution that followed the decree is called the "Era of Martyrs," or, more traditionally, "The Great Persecution." The emperor spared the lives of many Christians because there was a high demand for workers in quarries and mines where the Egyptian Christians supplied convict labor.

In 313 CE, Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) issued the Edict of Milan jointly with his eastern colleague, Licinius, establishing freedom of worship and legal status for Christianity. As a result, by about 350 CE, Egypt was primarily Christian. In 324 CE, the Council of Nicaea proclaimed the patriarchate of Alexandria to be subservient only to Rome, with control over the Christian churches of both Egypt and Libya. Highly influential in the formulation of Christian dogma and practice, the patriarchate of Alexandria was a theological force in the Christian church.

At some point the patriarchate of Constantinople rivaled that of Alexandria, and the resulting political and religious confrontation brought Egyptian Copts into conflict with the Byzantine government. The great schism initiated at the Council of

Chalcedon in 451 CE led to the separation of the Egyptian church from Catholic Christendom, a separation that shaped the future of eastern Christianity and weakened Byzantine rule in Egypt. The Council of Chalcedon sought to settle the great controversy regarding the human and divine natures of Christ. The Coptic Christians were Monophysites who believed that the incarnated Christ was one person with only one nature, possessing human and divine aspects. The council rejected this notion by declaring that Christ had two natures that perfectly combined his divine and human aspects. The Coptic Church strongly opposed this ruling, rejecting the bishop sent to Egypt by the council.

For nearly two centuries, Monophysitism in Egypt resisted political and religious authority in Constantinople. In another wave of persecution, representatives and members of the Egyptian church were forced to accept Byzantine orthodoxy. The religious authorities in Constantinople killed, oppressed, and exiled Coptic Christians, closing their churches. The Coptic Church was firm in the matter of appointing patriarchs: it continued to elect its own people and refused to accept theological decisions made in Constantinople. This fifth-century break made the Coptic Church an Egyptian national church, which has maintained its own traditions to the present day.

In the seventh century CE, Coptic Christians suffered from religious persecutions on one side and the increasing burden of taxation on the other. It all created animosity between the Copts and the orthodox Byzantines, which resulted in the Egyptians welcoming the conquering forces of Islam.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Diocletian; *Groups and Organizations*: Cenobites; Monophysites; *Key Events*: Chalcedon, Council of; Islam, Expansion of; Nicaea, Council of; *Key Places*: Monastery of Saint Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt)

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Forum of Constantine (Constantinople)

The Forum of Constantine was one of the most important locations in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. The forum was constructed at the top of one of the peninsula's various hills, outside the city walls. Constantine the Great initiated a series of building projects with an idea to transform Byzantium into a new Roman capital, and the forum was part of this plan. Envisioned as the central square of the city, it involved several significant structures, including the Column of Constantine at the center, the

Senate House on its northern side, and a *nymphaeum*, or monumental fountain, on the southern side. In the late ninth century CE, the addition of a small chapel dedicated to Constantine adorned the bottom of the column.

The forum, built before the city's official inauguration in 330 CE, became one of the most prominent architectural features in Constantinople, and it was one of the main ideological spaces for imperial rule. It was central to the celebrations of the founding of the city on May 11 and was located on the route of the triumphal procession, which led from the Golden Gate to the Great Palace. Traditionally, Roman forums were rectangular, unlike the Forum of Constantine, which was circular and possessed two massive gates to the east and west. The forum in Dyrrachion (modern Durres in Albania) constructed by the end of the fifth century CE was also circular and possibly resembled the Forum of Constantine.

The porphyry column of Constantine, known as the Cemberlitas, built in the center of the square still stands today. Initially, the column had a statue of Constantine at the top, but when this collapsed in 1106, Emperor Manuel Comnenus (r. 1143–1183 CE) replaced it with a cross. The forum remained in its original form until 1204. The importance of the column lies in the fact that the monument is virtually the only remaining trace of the city's founder, Constantine the Great. The archaeological excavations in the last century shed light on a section of the forum's foundations at the distance of about 70 meters from the column, suggesting that the circular forum had a diameter of 140 meters. Also discovered on the site were white Proconnesian (from Marmara Island) marble paving slabs. Two stories of colonnades complemented the forum and two arches carved in marble along the Mese, Constantinople's main street. The findings were not enough to enable a complete reconstruction of the forum, so all information about it derives mostly from written sources.

The Senate House in the Forum of Constantine was one of two in Constantinople—the other one situated near the Augusteum (or Place Impériale). The Augusteum was an open space, initially a food market; but with the addition of porticos, or porches, it also functioned as a space for imperial processions. The Senate House faced the northern side of the forum, and it had a porch of porphyry columns. Some sources indicate that the Senate House's most prominent feature was magnificent bronze doors with depictions of the war between the Olympian gods and the giants, which possibly came to Constantinople from the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. The forum also probably contained a gilded statue of Constantine that was the focus of the city's anniversary held in May. The *nymphaeum,* a colossal fountain adorned with a series of sculptures, stood on the opposite side of the forum. A disastrous fire around 464 CE caused severe damage to both the Senate House and the *nymphaeum.*

According to some sources, many antique statues decorated the forum. A gigantic bronze Athena that stood outside the Senate House was the focus of attention. The statue was almost unquestionably Athena Promachos or Parthenos from the Athenian Acropolis. Several sources also relate that Constantine brought to Constantinople a sacred object known as the Palladium, placing it directly under the Column of Constantine. The Palladium was a protective statue that originally existed in Troy (mentioned by Homer in the *Iliad*) and, according to Virgil in the *Aeneid*, later moved to Rome by Aeneas, the founder of Rome. Another emphasis on Troy was a group of

statues representing the Judgment of Paris, a decision by the son of King Priam of Troy that led to the Trojan War. The forum's western arch contained two bronze female statues identified as "the Hungarian" and "the Roman," and along with them there was also a dolphin, an elephant, a group of hippocamps (mythological sea creatures resembling a fish and possessing the head of a horse), Athena, Thetis, and Artemis. Other possible statues were Poseidon, Asclepios, and Dionysius.

The major route led from the Golden Gate in the wall of the new city of Constantine (not to the later Golden Gate in the wall of Theodosius II) (r. 404–450 CE), moving eastward, crossing the Forum Bovis, the Forum Amastrianum, and the Forum Tauri, to the Golden Milestone in the Augusteum. The Forum of Constantine was the inevitable termination of the route, with the Column of Constantine in its center, along with the Churches of Saint Constantine and Saint Mary. In the Augusteum, the front of the Senate House and the west wall of the palace marked its ending point. The church of Hagia Sophia and the church of Holy Wisdom, which Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) erected, surrounded the Augusteum on the north; on the east, it was bordered by the Senate House and palace buildings. The palace, the grand entrance gate known as the Chalke, or Bronze Gate, and the north side of the Hippodrome, along with the public Baths of Zeuxippus, faced the Augusteum from the south. There was no passage for the public between the east side of the Hippodrome and the palace. According to scholars, a wall surrounded the Augusteum and had gates on the west side from southwest of Hagia Sophia to a point between the palace and the Hippodrome. Therefore, the entrance to the Hippodrome and the Baths of Zeuxippus was probably located outside the Augusteum.

Ljudmila Djukic

See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; *Key Places*: Golden Gate (Constantinople); Great Palace of Constantinople; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Golden Gate (Constantinople)

The Golden Gate, the entrance to the city from the west, is among the 10 main gates in the double line of the fifth-century Theodosian Land Walls in Constantinople; it is the most important one and rather exceptional. Situated north of the Sea of Marmara, it stands between the 9th and 10th towers of the inner walls. The gate is a triple arch, with the central opening higher and wider than those on the sides.

The date of the construction of the Golden Gate is uncertain, and debate has been ongoing among scholars whether it was the work of Theodosius I (r. 378–395 CE) or of Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE). Usually the gate is considered as more or less contemporary to the Theodosian Walls, although it has been noticed that the triple arch and flanking towers represent a preceding phase compared with the fortification in which they have been incorporated. An inscription commemorating the victory of Theodosius over a "tyrant" has been interpreted as celebration of the victory of Theodosius II over the usurper John (425 CE). However, some historians have recently argued that the inscription is not a later addition to the monument and therefore it must date before 413 CE. This is the year by which, according to the *Codex Theodosianus*, the Theodosian Wall was complete. Furthermore, the fifth-century columns and capitals of the arches are considered later additions and cannot be used to date the monument. In conclusion, the Golden Gate was originally constructed as a triumphal arch of Theodosius I, between 388 and 391 CE, and the tyrant mentioned must have been Magnus Maximus, defeated in 388 CE. The construction may have marked his success over the Visigoths in 386 CE after the catastrophic Battle of Adrianople (378 CE) that helped the Romans regain their self-confidence. Besides, the triple arch seems to resemble the earlier Roman triumphal triple-portal arches of Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE) and Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE) in Rome. Moreover, atop the monument is a sculptural ensemble representing the victory celebration of Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE) in a chariot drawn by the four elephants given to him in 384 CE or 387 CE by Shapur III (r. 383–388 CE). The Golden Gate was likely constructed between 388 CE and the triumphal procession of November 10, 391 CE. Located on a route that began in the important suburb of Hebdomon, it likely marked a proposed line of fortifications. By 413 CE, the structure became part of the land walls, and the door frames may have been added to the portals.

The Golden Gate served as the great ceremonial gate of the land walls of Byzantium. Here is where the emperors departed for their campaigns and where they celebrated when returning victorious. Many emperors made a triumphant entry through the Golden Gate, including Heraclius (r. 610–641 CE) in 628 CE. After he defeated the Sasanians and recovered the True Cross, he entered the city on an elephant-drawn chariot. Occasionally, as a sign of honor, important foreign visitors were admitted through it—even the pope himself (708 CE). The last recorded notable event was the entry of Michael VIII Palaeologus (r. 1260–1282) into Constantinople in 1261 after its recovery from the Latin occupation.

The triple gateway and its complex were built from white marble and had golden doors, contrasting the usual brick-and-limestone construction of the walls. In the Byzantine era, the gate was adorned with statuary, among which on the top stood a monumental quadriga of Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE), which collapsed during the earthquake of October 740 CE. The statue commemorated a triumphal entrance of the emperor into Constantinople (384–387 CE). Also, there were reliefs, inscriptions, war trophies, and even frescoes, together with the golden decoration, that gave the gate the name of Porta Aurea—Golden Gate. Of all this decor, only the smallest fragments have been recorded or preserved.

Despite its ceremonial role, the Golden Gate still served military purposes as one of the strongest positions along the walls of the city. It withstood several attacks during the various sieges: by Huns (514 CE), by Arabs (670s CE), by the Bulgars of Khan Krum (813 CE) and Czar Symeon (913 CE). The gate was also part of a fort with five towers built by Emperors John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976 CE) and Manuel I Comnenus (r. 1143–1180). In 1204 it was partially destroyed when the Crusaders sacked Constantinople, but it was restored by following rulers of the empire. Transverse walls between the inner and outer walls were added, forming an almost separate fortress known as Heptapyrgion, or the "seven-towered bulwark." John VI Kantakouzenos (r. 1347–1354) recognized its military value, recording that it was virtually impenetrable. His successor, John V (r. 1341–1391), alternately reduced and restored it, amid Turkish pressures and domestic strife. The fort was destroyed for the second time by the emperor in 1391, ordered by Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I (r. 1389–1402), who threatened to take harsh measures against John V's captive son.

During the siege that led to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Sultan Mehmet II mounted a cannon against the Golden Gate. Still, under the Turks, the Byzantine fortifications were expanded. The present fortress, Yedikule (Turkish for Heptapyrgion), was used as a prison and the Ottoman state treasury until 1789, and its central square now serves as an open-air theater. The Golden Gate itself has been closed for a long time.

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See also: *Individuals*: Theodosius II; *Key Events*: Adrianople, Battle of; Fourth Crusade; Theodosian Code; *Objects and Artifacts*: True Cross; *Key Places*: Walls of Theodosius (Constantinople)

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Great Palace of Constantinople

The Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople was the principal imperial residence from 330 CE to 1081, and it was the ceremonial and administrative center of the Byzantine Empire for almost 700 years. The complex of the Great Palace had a high cultural and historical significance and exerted a strong influence on both Western European and Levantine palatine architecture. It also established a connection between Roman imperial and medieval palaces. The palace remains are mainly

analyzed based on old texts and visual representations, since they lay beneath following structures such as the Sultan Ahmet Mosque.

The oldest structure of the Great Palace is the residential section of the Palace of Daphne, built by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) and his successors in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. The whole complex included buildings with diverse purposes, such as the Hippodrome and adjacent palaces, the Bathos of Zeuxippus, and the Augusteum or imperial forum where Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) erected his equestrian statue on a monumental column. Other structures included the churches of Hagia Sophia, Saint Eirene, and, later, Saint John Diippion and Saints Sergius and Bacchus, as well as the library and peristyle courtyard called the Basilica, and the *fora* of Constantine and Theodosius. There was a main street known as the Mese, along which the Adventus and other important civic and religious processions proceeded. Corridors and covered colonnaded walkways connected these structures. A wall surrounded the entire complex during the reign of Justinian II (r. 685–711 CE). It was used for ceremonial purposes and had gigantic bronze (chalke in Turkish) doors. The layout of the complex toward the seawalls is not clear. Most probably it encompassed imperial gardens and aristocratic villas, following the example of Rome and its Flavian Palace or Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli.

Later emperors further extended the imperial compound. According to the Book of Ceremonies from the 10th century, newly constructed buildings assumed some of the ceremonial function. Thus, for example, the Chrysostriklinos (Golden Hall), the golden throne room of Emperor Justin II (r. 565–574 CE) from the late sixth century located in the Lower Palace, was assigned for state ceremonial purposes. These ceremonies previously took place in individual rooms of the Daphne Palace complex: the first throne room from the reign of Constantine I (r. 306–337 CE) and the hall of Consistorion, an imperial audience chamber.

The Chapel of Saint Stephen, the Augusteum, and the Consistorion, among others, composed parts of the complex of the Daphne Palace. They still functioned as a setting for imperial ceremonies during the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 913–959 CE), although most of the ceremonial life at that time centered on the Chrysostriklinos, the Triklinos (Hall of Procession) of Justinian II (r. 685–695 CE and r. 705–711 CE), and the churches of the Theotokos of the Pharos and the magnificent Nea Ekklesia (New Church). Porphyrogenitus, on his death in 959 CE, was carried on a litter to specific halls within the palace so that the population could view his body.

However, when Emperor Nicephorus Phocas (r. 963–969) fortified the Great Palace in 969 CE, he excluded the structures of the Daphne Palace from its boundaries. By this date, they had ceased to have any ceremonial function. After that, it fell into gradual ruin, and its condition deteriorated even further during the period of the Latin rule in the capital (1204–1261). The sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and Latin occupation afterward caused considerable damage in the area.

Before the beginning of the Middle Byzantine period, the imperial ceremonies occurred in the Lower or Sacred Palace. In the 10th century, as indicated by the ceremonies of the Macedonian Dynasty, the Great Palace remained a site of considerable ritual relevance. During the rule of Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081–1118), there was a

AUGUSTEUM

The *Augusteum* was an open space that once lay south of the Church of Hagia Sophia. It was named in honor of the mother of Constantine the Great, to whom the title of Augusta had been bestowed. In this area, her statue rested on a column of pink marble. The *Augusteum* preserved its prestige and importance throughout the centuries due to its vicinity to buildings related to public life and the administration. It carried a great ideological and symbolic meaning, while it connected the great church of Orthodoxy with the imperial ceremonial.

The *Augusteum* initially functioned as a food market. It started to lose the characteristic of a public square when porticos were added surrounding it. Only Procopius among the historians called the area a forum. Other historians consider the *Augusteum* a forecourt annexed to Hagia Sophia. The middle and late Byzantine sources defined it as courtyard. The *Augusteum* was intended for imperial processions. The emperor would cross it to enter into the Church of Hagia Sophia. During the coronation of the emperors, the people and the army forces were gathered there. The existence of gateways as well as the fact that the open area was enclosed with walls and porticos confirms that access to the area was restricted. During its long history, the *Augusteum* underwent many changes, and various construction phases have been discovered. It was decorated with statues, often placed upon honorary columns.

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significant change to the Blachernae Palace, close to the Golden Horn, as the primary imperial residence. Intensive construction began on the grounds of the Great Palace at the end of the 12th century when the so-called pleasure pavilion in Oriental style—Mouchroutas—was built.

By the time the city fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, almost all structures of the Great Palace had become uninhabited ruins. The site later became allocated for the construction of several Ottoman residences. However, significant transformation of the area occurred with construction of the Sultan Ahmet Mosque between 1609 and 1616. Over the remains of the Upper Palace, the mosque was erected along with neighboring buildings. Not much of the structures were left aboveground since the builders used brick stones and pillars of the Great Palace and the Senate House for construction of the mosque complex.

Archaeological research of the Great Palace began in the early 19th century with detailed analysis of surviving manuscripts. A large-scale fire in the early 20th century destroyed much of the mosque's neighboring district and allowed an extensive archaeological survey to take place. In the excavations that Turkish archaeologists completed in the 1950s, they identified the site of the late Roman Senate House and the Pittakia, a structure used mainly as an administrative complex and prison.

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See also: *Individuals*: Comnenus, Alexius I; Constantine the Great; Phocas; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Fourth Crusade; *Objects and Artifacts*:

Equestrian Statue of Justinian I; *Key Places*: Forum of Constantine Constantinople; Golden Gate (Constantinople); Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Hagia Sophia (Constantinople)

One of the greatest achievements of late antiquity and considered one of the world's most extraordinary monuments, the Church of Hagia Sophia (literally "Holy Wisdom") in Constantinople is a masterpiece of Byzantine architecture—with its architectural characteristics and spectacular interior decoration. For 1,000 years, it was the seat of the patriarchate of Constantinople and the setting where many ecumenical councils and imperial ceremonies took place.

Emperor Constantius II (r. 337–361 CE) built the first Hagia Sophia on the foundations of a pagan temple and dedicated it in 360 CE. As a cathedra, or bishop's seat, it initially received the name of Megale Ekklesia, meaning "great church" in Greek. Today's name, Hagia Sophia, came into use around 430 CE. A fire during riots in 404 CE that followed the second banishment of the capital's bishop, Saint John Chrysostom, destroyed this first church structure. Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE) quickly rebuilt the second church and dedicated it in 415 CE. However, the Nika Revolt of 532 CE caused severe destruction and death in the city, and the church burned down.

Following the revolt, Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) commanded the church be rebuilt. The new building was completed in record time, considering its elaborate structure, and inaugurated on December 27, 537 CE. Architects responsible for carrying out the complex architectural project were Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus, influenced probably by the Greek mathematician Archimedes (ca. 287–212 BCE) and his theories.

The layout of the Hagia Sophia is almost square. The church is a combination of a longitudinal basilica with a centralized building executed in a completely innovative way: it is 70 meters wide and 75 meters long. It has a vast central nave supported by an architecturally complex system of vaults and semidomes. The high central dome is supported on pendentives and two semidomes on each side, measuring 31 meters across and a height of 48.5 meters. The pendentive consists of four concave triangular sections of masonry whose function is to enable the placing of the dome's circular

Emperor Justinian's sixth-century masterpiece, the Hagia Sophia ("Holy Wisdom" in Greek), became the symbol of Byzantine wealth and cultural grandeur. Subsequent rulers sought to connect themselves with this awe-inspiring monument by renovating, adding, and updating, which has greatly modified the original structure. (Ozturk/iStockphoto.com)

base on a rectangular foundation of the building. Therefore, the weight of the dome transverses the pendentives to four colossal piers at the corners and creates an illusion of the dome floating upon four great arches. Contemporary scholars often compared this massive central dome to the vault of heaven itself. At the western and eastern ends, semidomes extend the arched openings, which in turn rest on smaller semidomes and arcades. The flat wall on each side of the interior, north and south, has 12 large windows in two rows, 7 in the lower and 5 in the upper part. The dome rests atop great marble piers, with three aisles between the columns and galleries above. The walls between the galleries and the base of the dome have windows, creating an outstanding atmosphere.

Nevertheless, this complicated structural system was not without its flaws, as the first dome collapsed in 558 CE. It was rebuilt even higher in height in 562 CE. However, earthquakes and other natural phenomena seriously weakened the foundations of the building, so additional partial collapses occurred in 989 CE and 1346. Despite all of this, the main architectural elements are identical to those constructed between 532 and 537 CE.

The church is notable for its highly decorated interior. A wide range of expensive materials covered all interior surfaces, from polychrome marble to purple porphyry, including ornamental stone inlays, and precious gold mosaics. The interior arcades stand on decorative marble columns taken from ancient buildings. Originally, ceilings and vaults of the church had no other decoration but the gold background. The

only figural detail was an enormous cross in a medallion that dominated the crowning point of the dome, though new mosaics were added (some still present today) after the Iconoclastic period (726–843 CE). Simple stucco (a type of plaster) covered the exterior walls, revealing the clarity of massed vaults and domes.

A splendid mosaic in the apse depicts the Virgin and Child, including a partly damaged representation of Archangel Gabriel. The masterpieces of the Hagia Sophia's mosaics are on the upper floor, in the galleries. Church councils utilized the South Gallery, and its best-known mosaic is called the Deesis, opposite the marble door. It depicts a triumphant Christ—known as Christ Pantocrator—with the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist standing at his sides. In this zone there are also two golden mosaics: Christ with Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus (r. 1042–1055) and Empress Zoe; Virgin and Child with Emperor John II Comnenus (r. 1118–1143) and Empress Irene.

The exit from the Hagia Sophia is known as the Vestibule of the Warriors because it was a space reserved for the emperor's bodyguards who waited while he stayed inside the church. There is a magnificent 10th-century composition typical for Byzantine iconography—the Virgin with donors, in this case, Constantine and Justinian. Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) offers the Virgin a model of the city of Constantinople, as its founder, and Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) presents the Church of the Hagia Sophia, which he rebuilt.

The Venetians looted the church during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and replaced the patriarch of Constantinople with a Latin bishop. After Mehmet II's (r. 1451–1481) conquest of the city in 1453, he converted the Hagia Sophia into a mosque, Ayasofya Camii. It stood until the beginning of the 20th century and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. During the period of Ottoman dominion, some changes occurred. Minarets were built around the buildings' perimeter—tall, thin towers near a mosque from which Muslims are called to pray. The Ottomans covered the Christian mosaics with whitewash, adding exterior buttresses for structural support. In 1934, the Turkish government decided to secularize the church and convert it into a museum, which allowed the mosaics to see the light of day once again.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Ecumenical Church Councils; *Individuals*: Chrysostom, John; Constantine the Great; Justinian; Theodosius II; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; Fourth Crusade; Golden Age (Reign of Justinian I); Iconoclastic Controversy; Islam, Expansion of; Nika Revolt; *Objects and Artifacts*: Hagia Sophia Mosaics

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Hippodrome (Constantinople)

One of the most significant buildings in Constantinople, the Hippodrome was a venue where central events in the life of the capital's citizens took place. Apart from being a location for chariot races, it was a place where imperial ceremonies and some festivities occurred. Initially constructed during the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE), it was later expanded by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE). Remains of the old race course are visible today in the form of a park situated in modern Sultanahmet Meydani or "Horse Square."

The Hippodrome was probably constructed in 203 CE and then enlarged by Constantine after he had inaugurated his new capital in 330 CE. The descriptions in the sources conflict in details, but scholars generally agree that the circus was 400 to 450 meters long, and around 150 meters wide. The oval track, enclosed by tiers of seating that rose 12 meters from the ground, measured about 300 meters in circumference. Seating capacity ranged from 40,000 to 80,000; 60,000 was the recognized estimate. The seating area was likely not larger in the Hippodrome than in the Circus Maximus.

In the traditional Roman style, the circus had the *spina*, the longitudinal barrier in the center that divided the arena into two tracks, which the chariots had to round several times. The *spina* was high and narrow, standing about four and a half meters above the floor of the circus and extending down the center of the track for approximately 200 meters. Decorated by artwork donated by emperors and famous throughout the empire, dolphins and eggs served as lap counters.

The euripus or watercourse ditch separated the track from the tiers. At the southern end, there was a semicircular *sphendone*, a curved section of the race track where it begins to turn back toward the starting gates. The *sphendone* was on massive vaults because the ground was uneven at that point. The *carceres* or starting points at the northern end had at their top the famous bronze sculpture known as the "Four Horses." The Crusaders carried the statue to Venice in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. Its replica now decorates the facade of Saint Mark's Basilica and the church's museum houses the original.

Generally, the races themselves in both circuses, in Constantinople and the Circus Maximus in Rome, were very much alike, although scholars have recognized some distinctions. For example, four *metae* or turning posts protected the *spina* in Constantinople, compared with only two posts in the Circus Maximus. Also, in Constantinople, nearby turning points were statues assigned to Blues and Greens, on the north

and south, respectively. Additionally, an eastern section was dedicated to Reds and a western to Whites, four factions in all.

Constantinople also included the *kathisma* in the eastern grandstand—the imperial box or lodge. Here the emperor and his family and other distinguished members of the imperial government sat to watch the races. The *kathisma* provided direct access to the imperial palace, adjacent to the Hippodrome, through a spiral staircase and internal passageway. The lodge itself had a view of the track with an open balcony and could be closed off from both the Hippodrome and the palace. This arrangement indicates the critical role that the emperor played in the activities of the circus. The *kathisma* has its antecedents in Augustus's (r. 27 BCE–14 CE) royal enclosure, the *pulvinar*, constructed to receive the emperor, his family, and guests in the Circus Maximus in Rome.

Only three severely damaged objects still occupy their places on the site of the *spina*. Constantine placed in the center the great bronze Serpent Column dedicated at Delphi in honor of the Greek victory over the Persians in 479 BCE. Two obelisks decorated the *spina*, one named after Theodosius I and the so-called Built Obelisk, also known as the Obelisk of Porphyrogenitus. The Obelisk of Theodosius comprised the Egyptian obelisk of Tuthmosis III (r. 1490–1436 BCE) and its sculpted base dated to 390 CE. The former was brought to Constantinople probably at the time of Constantine I and erected in the Hippodrome during the reign of Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE). The sculpted base is one of the most important secular monuments surviving in the city. It provides crucial information about chariot races and the activities of the imperial family in the circus. The Built Obelisk was not an original monolith but rather an imitation built of ashlar blocks, large square-cut stones, approximately 32 meters in height. It was erected by either Constantine I or Theodosius I, probably to complement the Obelisk of Theodosius. In the 10th century, Constantine VII (r. 913–959 CE) covered it with gild bronze plaques (now lost), an event commemorated in an inscription at the base of the obelisk. The monument was restored in 1895/96.

Originally there were seven statues on the central *spina* of the Hippodrome, representing charioteer Porphyrius, but the bases of only two endured. Those almost identical marble statues paid tribute to the famous charioteer who was active in the first quarter of the sixth century CE. Fans of two opposing factions, the Blues and the Greens, commissioned them. It is quite probable that the Greens erected the older monument. When Porphyrius switched to the opposing side, the Blues faction put up another statue. Both bases are adorned praising the charioteer. The main relief represents Porphyrius, standing in his chariot drawn by four horses (*quadriga*), holding a wreath in one hand and the reins or a palm branch in the other.

Individual sections of the grandstands were allocated for each of the color factions on the west side of the Hippodrome, facing the *kathisma*. Probably in the following order: Blues nearest to the *carceres*, then Whites, Reds, and finally Greens nearest to the *sphendone*. The order of the colors across from the emperor's box depended upon the performance the factions delivered in the imperial ceremonies related to the races.

SERPENT COLUMN

The Serpent Column is one of three remaining monuments of the Hippodrome of Constantinople and the only surviving bronze monument. It is now positioned between the Obelisk of Theodosius and the Built Obelisk, indicating the location of the *spina* of the Hippodrome. The column was probably brought during the rule of Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), though it is possible it was transferred to its current location later in the Byzantine era.

The Serpent Column was originally part of a victory tripod (three-legged structure), which was dedicated to the Sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi by the Greeks after their victory over the Persians in the Battle of Plataea in 479 BCE. The monument is made of three snakes twisting around each other to form the column pole. Originally, three heads expanded from the top of the intertwined snakes of the column, but they were all knocked off at some point. The current column has a height of 3.53 meters.

The circumstances in which the column lost its heads are unknown. The upper jaw of one head—now at the Istanbul Archaeological Museums—was discovered in 1848 and is flat and wide and probably served as a support for the golden tripod.

Excavations at the Hippodrome in the 19th and 20th centuries uncovered several water channels. Traces of lead piping were also found underneath the Serpent Column and the nearby Built Obelisk, revealing that both monuments once served as fountains. It was probably the column's use as a fountain that saved it from being looted or melted down by the Crusaders in 1204.

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The peculiarity of the Hippodrome was silver organs that belonged to the Blues and Greens, instruments dating back to the 5th century CE that accompanied the dancers performing between races and in victory celebrations. Before the 10th century CE, both organs had a new application in the imperial liturgy.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Factions, Political; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; *Groups and Organizations*: Demes; Political Parties; *Venationes*; *Objects and Artifacts*: Obelisk of Theodosius I; *Key Places*: Great Palace of Constantinople; Saint Mark's Basilica (Venice)

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Jerusalem

Jerusalem is an ancient city of the Middle East, known as a holy city due to a pivotal role it played in the development of the three major monotheistic religions, as a center of pilgrimage, and an object of devotion. For Christians, Jerusalem is the setting of both Jesus's suffering and his victory. For Jews, it is a proof of their ancient greatness and independence, as well as a center of national revival. For Muslims, Jerusalem was the Prophet Muhammad's destination on his journey toward God in the night, and the site of the sacred Dome of the Rock, an Islamic shrine. Over the many centuries of its existence, Jerusalem was under control of various dynasties and states. Since 1967, it has been under the rule of the state of Israel.

Modern Jerusalem is a unified city extending on hilly area. To the east, an observer can look down on the Dead Sea and the mountains of eastern Jordan (the biblical mountains of Moab) across the Jordan River. To the west, it faces the Mediterranean coast and Sea. The Old City represents the center of the modern municipality and has an exceedingly long history dating back to the fourth millennium BCE, making it one of the oldest cities in the world inhabited without interruption. The walled medieval enclosure of approximately one square kilometer is a nucleus from which the entire city has grown.

The Jewish tradition relates that ancestors of Abraham, Shem and Eber, founded the city. In the Bible, Jerusalem first appears under the name Salem, as a city ruled by King Melchizedek, who allied with Abraham (recognized as Shem in legend). Later, in the time of Joshua, the territory of Jerusalem was assigned to the tribe of Benjamin. The city remained under the independent control of the Jebusites until approximately 1000 BCE, when David subjugated it and made it his capital. His son and successor, Solomon, ordered the construction of the city's First Temple.

Jerusalem grew to be the political capital of the United Kingdom of Israel and later, the Kingdom of Judah, during a time frame then known as the First Temple Period. The temple building served as a religious center for the Israelites. The first period ended around 586 BCE, when the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar II destroyed Solomon's Temple and, in revenge for a revolt, took a great number of Jews captive to Babylon. In 538 BCE, after 50 years of captivity in Babylon, Persian King Cyrus the Great (r. 559–530 BCE) issued an edict permitting the Jews to return to Judah to reconstruct their temple. Thus, the building of the Second Temple was completed in 516 BCE, during the reign of Darius the Great (r. 522–486 BCE).

When the Macedonian ruler Alexander the Great (r. 336–323 BCE) conquered the Persian Empire, Jerusalem and Judea became Macedonian-controlled until they fell to Ptolemy I during the Ptolemaic Dynasty. In 198 BCE, Ptolemy V lost Jerusalem and Judea to the Seleucids under Antiochus III (r. 223–187 BCE). The Seleucid attempt to transform Jerusalem into a Hellenized city was completed in 168 BCE with the successful Maccabean revolt of Matthias the High Priest and his five sons against Antiochus IV Epiphanes (r. 175–164 BCE). They established the Hasmonean Kingdom in 152 BCE with Jerusalem as its capital.

In the following period, Rome installed Herod the Great (r. 37–4 BCE) as a client king. He engaged in the development of the city; he built many important structures and expanded the Temple Mount, buttressing the courtyard with stone blocks. In the sixth century CE, the city and the great part of the enclosed area became part of the province of Judaea (modern Israel and Palestine), governed directly from Rome. Herod's successors ruled Judaea as client kings until 96 CE. Emperor Hadrian (r. 117–138 CE) Romanized the city, renaming it Aelia Capitolina. He forbade the Jews to enter it, and the ban itself continued until the fourth century CE. Hadrian also renamed the entire province of Judea as Syria Palaestina.

Until the 7th century CE, the city's position was unstable and frequently changed hands between the Roman, the Byzantine, and the Sassanid Empires. It was a crucial moment when, in 638 CE, the Islamic Caliphate enlarged and conquered Jerusalem because of its condition as Islam's third holiest city after Mecca and Medina. The city remained under Arab control until the Crusades, and Jews were forbidden to return to the city. From 1099 onward, the Crusaders dominated Jerusalem. They elected Godfrey, a Frankish noble, as their first leader. After his death in 1100, the Crusaders named his brother Baldwin as the first king of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The state took over the territories of present-day Israel, western Jordan, and southern Lebanon. The Crusader rule in Jerusalem lasted a mere 90 years. In 1187 the sultan Saladin retook control of Jerusalem. In the 13th century the Crusaders reconquered Jerusalem for only two short periods, between 1229 and 1244—but always in agreement with the Muslim Caliphate.

The most prominent feature in Jerusalem is the city wall built in 1538–40 by Ottoman Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) on the foundations of earlier walls dating from the Crusaders' period. The city wall remains intact and unbroken. During the centuries when Jews were not allowed to enter the Temple Mount, its Western Wall became their holiest shrine. Since 1967 the wall has been farther uncovered, along with a large square that formed its front. Two Islamic structures are the main buildings on the platform: the golden-topped Dome of the Rock, completed in 691 CE, and the silver-topped Al-Aqsa Mosque, built in the early eighth century CE.

The Arab population is dominant in Jerusalem, and Christians make up the smallest but religiously most diverse section. Three patriarchs of the Eastern Orthodox churches reside there, and almost all main Christian sects have their representatives in the city in some form. The main and the largest groups are Orthodox, both Eastern and Oriental, along with Roman Catholic and Protestant. The Orthodox and Roman Catholic sects share control of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in accordance with the "status quo" rule—promulgated by the Ottoman sultan in 1852.

The Holy Land is subject to the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Church, in which the senior clergy are mainly ethnically Greek, while the laity and parish clergy are mostly ethnically Arab. When Muslims restored control over the city in 1244, they displaced the domination by the Roman Catholic Church that had been established by the conquest of the First Crusade in 1099. In 1334, the Franciscan order became "Custodian of the Holy Land" to protect Roman Catholic rights and properties in Muslim-controlled Jerusalem. In 1847, rights to a Latin (Catholic) patriarchate were extracted

from the Ottoman Empire because of Western intervention. The presence of Armenian Christians in the city dates to the fourth century CE, with an episcopal seat of the Armenian Orthodox Church established there in the seventh century CE. The Armenian Orthodox Church comprises the largest and oldest community of the non-Catholic and non-Greek Orthodox churches in the city.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Eastern Orthodox Church; *Groups and Organizations*: Franks; Muslims; Persians; Secret Societies; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; *Objects and Artifacts*: Crown of Aleppo; True Cross; *Key Places*: Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem); Church of the Nativity (Bethlehem)

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Monastery of Saint Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt)

The Saint Catherine monastery is the oldest uninterruptedly operating Christian monastic community. This Greek Orthodox monastery is situated in modern Egypt, on Mount Sinai in a valley north of Mount Musa in the Sinai Peninsula. The primary reason for its fame is its location—sacred to the three Abrahamic faiths due to its association with Moses. It was on that holy mountain, according to the Old Testament, where Moses saw the Burning Bush and received the Ten Commandments from God. Muslims call this mountain Jebel Musa (meaning "Moses's Mountain").

The story of Saint Catherine's Monastery began with the annexation of the Nabataean (Arab) Kingdom by the Romans during the early second century CE. The region declined under Roman rule, and the wilderness of the Sinai region attracted Christian monks in search of an ascetic life far away from human society. According to legend, it was during the early fourth century CE that Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE), ordered the Chapel of the Burning Bush to be erected on the site where Moses first encountered God. The empress dedicated the chapel to the Virgin Mary, and it is now the most sacred part of the monastery.

The Romans abandoned the region in the second half of the fourth century CE, which caused lawlessness, so the monastic communities eventually asked the Byzantine emperor for protection. During the sixth century CE, Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) built a fortified wall made of granite blocks around the chapel. Its

function was to safeguard the monks and to secure the land route from Aqaba to Suez. Additionally, Justinian commissioned the Church of the Transfiguration, which he completed around 560 CE. Following the example of Empress Helena, Justinian chose to dedicate this building to the Virgin Mary.

The monastery became associated with Saint Catherine of Alexandria, martyred in 307 CE. According to tradition, Roman Emperor Maxentius (r. 306–312 CE) ordered Saint Catherine to renounce her faith in Christianity. When she refused, he ordered her brutally beaten and tied to a rolling spiked wheel. When she survived this torture, the emperor had her beheaded. Miraculously, angels intervened and transported her body to Mount Sinai. In the 10th century CE, either the head and hand of the saint were housed in the monastery for safekeeping, or monks discovered her body and carried it there. When they became venerated as relics, the monastery turned into a pilgrimage site known as Saint Catherine's Monastery.

During the seventh century CE, as the new faith of Islam started spreading on the Arabian Peninsula and beyond, Christians found themselves in a perilous position. Nevertheless, Muslims spared the monks, and dispersed communities of Christians threatened by the rise of Islam found shelter in the monastery. The history of good relations between two religions is believed to have started in the times of the Prophet Muhammad. He accepted a request for protection of the monks from the monastery

The Monastery of Saint Catherine, located on Mount Sinai, is a sixth-century monastery established during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Justinian I. The earliest records of a monastic community living on the mountain date to the fourth century, but the existing structure was built during 548–565 CE. The monastery is known for its manuscript collection and icons, some of which survived Iconoclasm. (Thvietz/Dreamstime.com)

and signed a document known as the *Actiname* ("Holy Testament") in 623 CE, which granted to the monks of the Saint Catherine's exemption from taxes and military service. Even more, Muhammad urged Muslims to defend the monastery. Grateful for such treatment, in return between 1101 and 1106, during the Fatimid period, the monks accepted a crusader church within the monastery walls and converted it into a mosque, where local Bedouin Arabs still worship.

The Church of the Transfiguration is well preserved, retaining much of its original appearance. It is a basilica with three aisles, a central nave, a narthex (a large entrance typical for Byzantine architecture), and apse. The central nave contains massive granite columns adorned with capitals and decorated with Christian symbols. Each aisle has three chapels, and there is a chapel on each side of the apse. Located next to the main altar is a sarcophagus containing the relics of Saint Catherine (head and hand). The names of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), his wife, Theodora, and the builder Stephanos of Aila appear on the roof reinforcements, dating the construction to 548–565 CE. They are decorated with some of the most beautiful sixth-century CE mosaics. In the apse is a restored mosaic of the Transfiguration. The church, constructed of local stone, also incorporates other building materials, such as marble and wood, imported from distant places.

The monastery's treasury safeguards several extraordinary icons, some painted before the eighth century CE. A library built in 1945 contains numerous manuscripts, mainly Greek and Arabic. The collection includes the *Codex Syriacus*, a Syriac text of the Gospels written about 400 CE. A nearly complete *Codex Sinaiticus*, or "Sinai Bible," is a Greek manuscript dating from the fourth century CE, formerly belonging to Saint Catherine's and now in the British Museum in London. In 1975, the monks discovered 3,000 additional manuscripts hidden behind a wall in the monastery. They include a certain number of ancient biblical texts, formerly considered lost and selected art works. These excavated texts included missing sections from the *Codex Sinaiticus*, some 50 other incomplete codices, and 10 nearly complete ones, as well as other Greek texts in the uncial script (written entirely in capital letters) that provided fresh insights on the evolution of Greek writing.

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See also: *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Justinian; Theodora; *Groups and Organizations*: Muslims; *Key Events*: First Crusade; Fourth Crusade; Islam, Expansion of; *Objects and Artifacts*: *Codex Sinaiticus*; *Key Places*: Egypt; Mount Athos (Greece)

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Mount Athos (Greece)

Mount Athos has been a center of Eastern Orthodox monasticism and home to a large number of monasteries for many centuries. It is located on the peninsula with the same name in northern Greece, also known to Greeks and other Orthodox peoples as the Holy Mountain. Today there are 20 monasteries on Mount Athos: 17 Greek, 1 Russian, 1 Serbian, and 1 Bulgarian.

According to Greek mythology, while fighting in the battle of the gods and the giants, Thracian giant Athos threw a massive rock on Poseidon, the god of the sea. The rock unexpectedly fell into the sea and created a piece of land, now known as Mount Athos. Homer, famous ancient Greek poet, mentions Athos in the *Iliad*, same as the historian Herodotus, who listed various ancient cities in Athos. These cities were mainly inhabited by Thracians and Pelasgians and dominated by Philip II of Macedon (r. 359–336 BCE), father of Alexander the Great. Later, in 168 BCE, they were taken over by the Romans. Most of the cities were destroyed before the arrival of the Romans, but some of them must still have been inhabited in the centuries that followed, based on the finds from the early Christian period.

Hilandar Monastery, a Serbian Orthodox monastery built in 1198, is one of twenty monasteries located on Mount Athos in Greece. A monastic presence on Mount Athos is first attested to in the eighth century. The mountain itself was consecrated to the Virgin Mary, based on the tradition that it was granted to her as a garden. (Mladen Prokic/Dreamstime.com)

The fourth century brought the Christianization of the peninsula. It is believed that by the fifth century, monks began to inhabit Mount Athos as they found this deserted and isolated place ideal to worship their God in peace. The early Christian tradition tells how the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist while traveling to visit Lazarus in Cyprus had faced a devastating storm at sea and happened to find shelter on the peninsula. Therefore, the area is also known as the garden of the Virgin Mary.

Before the end of the ninth century, a small number of hermits and monks inhabited Athos, mainly the isthmus, and lived in

communities without any restriction. Two notable monks were Peter the Athonite and Euthymius of Thessalonica. According to a *sigillion* (treaty or edict of lesser importance) of Basil I (r. 867–886 CE), now lost, the Kolobou Monastery was founded in this period (872 CE) near the town of Ierissos. In 911 CE, the seat of the Protos (cathedra of the elders) was transferred from near the Canal of Xerxes to a new site, Mese (middle), as Karyes was called then. This transfer was caused by an increase in the number of monks and the fact that monasticism had by now spread over the entire Athos peninsula. However, historians give credit to Athanasios the Athonite for the foundation of organized monastic life. He established Great Lavra, the earliest and the largest monastery, and improved living conditions significantly.

Athanasius was born in Trebizond but lived his entire life in Bythinia, Asia Minor, before settling at the Holy Mountain. As an eminent person, he attracted to Athos many monks devoted to Christian ideals of living ascetic life. Therefore, various new monasteries were constructed. Athanasios's activity was not welcomed by everyone in the monastic communities, and many complained to the emperor of the time, John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976 CE). The emperor responded with the *typikon* of 972 CE, a charter bearing imperial gold bulla, *chrysobull*, which gave support to Athanasius's work. This document is known as the *Tragos* ("goat" in Greek) because it is written on goat's skin and it is the oldest preserved document with an imperial signature.

The 11th and 12th centuries were when Mount Athos reached the position of important monastic center in the Byzantine Empire. The number of monasteries increased, especially with support received from the Byzantine emperors. They would issue special edicts—*chrysobulls* and *sigillia*—to assign them numerous privileges and donate parcels of agricultural land.

Exactly at the time when the monastic organizations in other parts of the empire, mainly in Asia Minor, were continuously being destroyed by Seljuk Turks, cenobite communities were flourishing on Athos and their landed property was continuously on the rise, along with their influence. The tradition of the ascetic hermits also remained intact.

After the armies of the Fourth Crusade had occupied Constantinople, the Latins inhabited Greece and the monks encountered a disgraceful situation, which forced Athonite monasteries to solicit the protection from Pope Innocent III. With the liberation of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–1282), the Athonites' position did not change much because they opposed the Byzantine emperors' efforts to aim for the union of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

In the 14th century, Mount Athos faced even greater danger. Early in the century, the mercenaries of the Catalan Grand Company assaulted Mount Athos for two years (1307–1309). They devastated many monasteries, looted their treasures, and even terrorized the monks. As a result, the number of monasteries decreased significantly—of the 300 at the beginning of the century, only 35 were left by its end. However, when in the middle of the century Macedonia became the territory of Serbian ruler Stefan Dushan (king of Serbia, r. 1444–1446; emperor of the Serbs, Greeks, and Albanians, r. 1346–1355), he visited Mount Athos and financially supported many of the monasteries. New monasteries were founded, churches and their refectories were decorated with frescoes, and the quality of monastic life improved.

The monks of Mount Athos embraced Hesychasm, a type of monastic life characterized by the contemplation of God in uninterrupted prayer, which enables practitioners to reach divine quietness. The issue of Hesychasm caused a serious division in Byzantine society. The Byzantine aristocrats supported it, and Hesychasm was even accepted practice at three councils in the 14th century. Hesychasm was a controversy that had significant consequences for the ecclesiastical administration with corresponding political implications. These religious and political differences ultimately led to the disastrous civil war of 1341–1347.

During the Ottoman Empire's occupation, the monasteries mainly retained their status, including their privileges, administrative autonomy, and their lands. The only burden was obligation to pay very high taxes, which were steadily growing. For that reason, the monks deserted the monasteries, and very few remained. Still, the greatest tragedy occurred in 1822, when thousands of women and children came to find refuge in the area. Turkish armies killed the monks, women, and children. They plundered any treasure they found and burned valuable manuscripts.

Then, with the end of the War of Independence (1821–1832), peace returned to Athos, and so did the monks. When Ottoman rule ended in 1912, Athos had approximately 10,000 monks; however, the area was once again deserted in the following decades. Around the 1970s, Mount Athos experienced another revival, attracting younger generations. Today, Mount Athos is a self-governing area, still confined to males where visits are restricted, requiring a special entrance permit.

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See also: *Groups and Organizations*: Anchorites; Bulgars; Cenobites; Slavs; *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; *Key Places*: Bulgaria; Egypt; Monastery of Saint Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt)

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Saint Mark's Basilica (Venice)

Saint Mark's Basilica (Basilica di San Marco) is the most well-known church building in Venice, Italy. The iconic building itself stands as wholly representative of Italo-Byzantine architecture. It is situated at the eastern end of Saint Mark's Square (Piazza San Marco), next to the Doge's Palace. Originally it was the doge's chapel, but it

became the city's cathedral in 1807. Since the 11th century, the five-domed basilica has been known as the Chiesa d'Oro, or the Golden Church, due to the perfect combination of its lavish exterior and gold mosaics in the interior. The church itself represents a symbol of Venetian affluence and prestige.

Saint Mark's Basilica, located in Venice, Italy, is a 10th-century basilica known for its blend of Italian and Byzantine architecture. The first church at this spot was built in 828 CE to house the relics of Saint Mark, which were taken from Alexandria, Egypt, by the Venetians. (Lingbeek/iStockphoto.com)

In 828 CE, merchants traveling from Italy to Egypt stole the ancient relics of Saint Mark the Evangelist from the city of Alexandria and brought them back home to Venice. Initially Saint Theodore was the patron saint of Venice, but soon Saint Mark replaced him. A winged lion as an evangelistic attribute of Saint Mark became an emblem of the Venetian Republic. The building of the first structure began in 829 CE to house and honor his remains. Initially, the relics rested in a temporary chapel within the Doge's Palace until the consecration of the church in 832 CE. This church burned during a rebellion against Doge Pietro Candiano IV in 976 CE, but Doge Domenico Contarini reconstructed it a century later. The current basilica, which incorporates the earlier buildings, reached completion around 1071.

Saint Mark's Basilica is modeled after Constantine the Great's Church of the Holy Apostles and the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The floor plan of the structure is a Greek cross, having equally long arms, and five domes crown the building: one dome over the crossing and another dome on each of the four arms. Each church arm comprises a central aisle and two side aisles. A narthex (large entrance area common to Byzantine churches) encloses the west end of the basilica. At the same time, it hides the cross shape of the structure and forms a grand wide facade. The design of the building is unmistakably Byzantine, with a high probability that both Byzantine and Italian architects and artisans participated in its construction and decoration. While the basic structure of the building remained almost unchanged over the last millennium, its decoration underwent regular modification. An extraordinary range of sculptures and mosaics, along with ceremonial and liturgical objects, embellished the church over the

centuries, which contributed to its overall richness. Especially significant for its adornment was the 14th century. Venetian merchants brought from the Orient a considerable number of architectural elements removed from ancient monuments—columns, capitals, or friezes—while assorted marbles and carvings progressively covered its exterior brickwork. A new facade, and higher wooden domes covering the original ones, complemented the Gothic architecture of the remodeled Doge's Palace.

The dominant features of the basilica's interior are mosaics on gold ground and surfaces made of varieties of marble and glass that all glow in the dim light. Jacobello and Pierpaolo dalle Masegne were the authors of marble statues, masterpieces of Venetian Gothic sculpture that stand on the screen separating the choir from the nave. The spectacular gilded mosaics, mostly from the 12th century, cover the vaults, arched ceilings, and cupolas, dome-shaped roofs, for a total area of around 8,000 square meters. Through events from the New Testament, they announce the message of Christian salvation and detail the legend of Saint Mark.

Elements representing Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic art decorate the west facade. The facade contains five recessed arches in a double line, which stand on clusters of columns. The carving of the capitals' columns dates to the 12th and 13th centuries. The upper part of the facade comes from a later period, with Gothic additions—pinnacles and other decorations. Particularly significant is the oldest exterior mosaic (1260–1270), executed over the farthest north door on the west facade. Its theme is *The Translation of the Body of Saint Mark*—translation of the saint's relics to the church—with the oldest known representation of Saint Mark's Basilica.

Two columns carved in the Byzantine style stand closest to the Doge's Palace on the south side. They possibly originated from fifth- or sixth-century CE Syria. The exterior corner of the treasury contains Egyptian porphyry sculptures called "Tetrarchs," presumably because they represent Emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE), and his three corulers.

The narthex contains a mosaic made of marble as pavement and splendid gilded mosaics with a lower ceiling. Most of them depict Old Testament stories, as an introduction to the stories of the New Testament inside the church. They are mostly from the 13th century, including the especially interesting *Stories of Genesis*. In front of the central door are 11th- and 12th-century figures of the Four Evangelists.

There are three primary elements related to the church: its altarpiece, campanile, and a sculpture of four horses. The famous altar retable Pala d'Oro (Golden Pall) is positioned behind the high altar and has a *baldacchino* (ornamental structure over the altar resembling a canopy) on columns with reliefs. The panel is made of gold and embedded with enamels of different sizes and shapes. Byzantine goldsmiths received a commission to do the work on the panel in 976 CE, and over the centuries, it underwent further additions. Although Napoleon stole some of the precious stones in 1797, many of them are still glowing.

The construction of the campanile begun under the Doge Pietro Tribuno (died 912 CE). After several reconstructions and adaptations, its current appearance dates from the early 16th century. In 1902 it collapsed again, but by 1912 it had been rebuilt on its original site, separated from the church.

The basilica's famous four bronze horses were set up on the west facade balcony above the portal of the basilica in about 1254. They were a prominent feature for a long time in the Hippodrome of Constantinople as a part of a Greco-Roman triumphal quadriga (chariot drawn by four horses moving in the same direction). Doge Enrico Dandolo brought them to Venice as treasures at the time of the Fourth Crusade (1204). Napoleon moved them to Paris in 1797, but they were returned to Venice in 1815. After being restored, the sculpture became part of the basilica's museum in the 1970s, with the aim to protect it from possible damage, with its replica placed outside.

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See also: *Key Events*: Fourth Crusade; *Key Places*: Church of Holy Apostles (Constantinople); Egypt; Hagia Sophia (Constantinople); Hippodrome (Constantinople)

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Theodosian Harbor (Constantinople)

The Harbor of Theodosius, previously known as the Harbor of Eleutherios, was one of several ports of ancient Constantinople. The harbor, which is considered the leading and largest harbor of the Byzantine era, dates to the fourth century CE. The Istanbul Archaeological Museum discovered it in 2004, beneath the modern Yenikapi neighborhood, when it initiated archaeological excavations before proceeding with the construction of the Metro line.

The Bosporus Tunnel Project represents the most extensive excavation site in city history, measuring about 58,000 square meters. These excavations have unearthed several cultural treasures of historical importance, including the Theodosian Harbor—Portus Theodosiacus. They confirmed that the harbor occupied a former sheltered bay, later silted by the Lykos stream. Therefore, it originally was located about 300 meters from today's shoreline.

Theodosius I (r. 379–395 CE) possibly built the harbor in the bay that indents deeply inland. The Sea of Marmora functioned like a natural harbor formed by a large bay, and the stream Lykos flowed into it. When Constantinople became the new imperial capital, trade rose significantly as the population increased. Therefore, as a result of

these changes, the capacity of the existing harbors proved insufficient. The Byzantines enlarged the natural deep bay at the mouth of the Lykos to satisfy the growing requirements of the city, by building a breakwater in the east-west direction on the south.

The name and foundation of the harbor in the Byzantine period have been the subject of much discussion. Writings of the period usually acknowledge that the Eleutherios Harbor located farther east preceded the Theodosian Harbor. Situated on the Theodosian Harbor's east side were granaries called Horrea Alexandrina or Horrea Theodosiana, named after Alexandria in Egypt, and the emperor himself. It all suggests that this was a massive commercial harbor used for unloading grains and other types of merchandise brought from Egypt. The grain import ceased when Muslim Arabs conquered Egypt in 641 CE.

In the beginning, large open-sea vessels directly transported grain into the town. Since the winds and currents at the Dardanelles represented a significant obstacle and delayed the transfer, Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) built intermediary depots at the island of Tenedos (modern Bozcaada), prominently mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, using smaller vessels instead. The growth of the capital required an increasing amount of material for construction, such as Prokonnesian marble, bricks, tiles, timber. This expansion also required more substantial quantities of food and beverages. Constantinople used the harbor for such purposes from the 7th to 11th centuries, as discovered shipwrecks demonstrate. Nevertheless, at some point in the 12th century, silt and debris carried by the Lykos blocked it.

Like other Byzantine harbors, the port had breakwaters furnished with high walls built on top of them. They served as natural barriers against storms and marked the lines of the inner main port. These walls had one more protective function—they were extensions of the fortifications on the coastline. Another characteristic of the Byzantine port cities is that they had both an inner port and an outer port. Access to them could be restricted or even blocked using iron gates or chains. The Golden Horn was also chained off, and thus converted into a large natural harbor. Towers flanked the entrances to the harbor to protect it. The Theodosian Harbor had the Belisarius Tower (also known as Belisarius Dungeon or Priest Tower) in the middle of the sea that possibly served as a lighthouse. Similar to other Byzantine harbors, this also contained two sections with porticoes. Quays and ports used to load and unload ships were another indispensable element of Byzantine port cities. Archaeologists have found part of one such dock, measuring 43.50 meters long, in the eastern part of the Theodosian Harbor.

The most significant objects discovered in the Yenikapi zone are over 35 shipwrecks ranging from the 7th to the late 10th or early 11th century—from the first war galleys to merchant vessels and small fishing boats. Since excavators found them buried in wet mud, they are all very well preserved. These beneficial conditions made it possible to discover a high number of artifacts on the same location. Shipwrecks along with small objects bear witness to life in the period to which they belonged.

The excavations are also sources of information on the process of silting in the area. The Lykos stream probably filled the western part of the Theodosian Harbor first. However, the eastern end continued in extensive use until sand and clay blocked the inner harbor completely. Then silt deposits advanced and filled the eastern section

starting in the north and progressing toward the south. Hypothetically, in the 10th or at the beginning of the 11th century, some natural cataclysm—a storm or tsunami—might have caused the destruction of so many ships. Archaeological digs indicate that the harbor became almost completely blocked by silt by the end of the 12th century and only coastal cargo ships and small fishing boats could enter afterward. The fact that none of the shipwrecks uncovered date to the later periods confirms this. In the Ottoman period, the district of Yenikapi, known as Vlanga, contained numerous yards used for the cultivation of fruits and vegetables, as described in the notes of travelers.

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See also: *Organization and Administration*: Market; *Individuals*: Justinian; *Key Events*: Islam, Expansion of; *Key Places*: Egypt

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Walls of Theodosius (Constantinople)

Because of its unique geographical and strategic position, Constantinople has had several walls. The oldest were built by Greek settlers. Romans rebuilt the city and the walls as well, and Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE) constructed new walls as the city expanded to the west. The Theodosian Land Walls, of which great parts survive, were built during the early years of Emperor Theodosius II's reign (r. 408–450 CE). They start on the coast of the Golden Horn, near the Blachernae Palace, and continue to the south, to the Golden Gate—which was incorporated in the new wall—and Sea of Marmara. Almost five and a half kilometers long, the walls represent the greatest piece of military architecture ever.

As the new capital of the empire was constantly growing, the old Walls of Constantine became insufficient to protect some suburbs. Also, at the beginning of the fifth century, the advance of Alaric's Visigoths into the Apennine Peninsula was perceived as threatening and made the Byzantine government decide to build a fourth set of Theodosian Walls.

The construction probably began during the reign of Theodosius II. They were positioned about 1,500 meters to the west of the old Constantinian Wall, which spread between the Sea of Marmara and the suburb of Blachernae near the Golden Horn with a length of 5,630 meters. Anthemius, the praetorian prefect of the East, supervised its construction. The walls were built in 412–414 CE, surrounded an area of 12 square kilometers, were 12 meters high, and had 96 towers about 18 meters tall.

The Theodosian walls of Constantinople were constructed early in the reign of Emperor Theodosius II (408–450 CE), under the direction of the praetorian prefect Anthemius. They encompassed a much larger area than had the original fourth-century wall built by Constantine. They were built in response to the imminent threat of Germans and Huns and proved effective against all challengers. No enemy penetrated the land wall until the city's final conquest by Ottoman sultan Mehmed II in 1453. (design-ist/iStockphoto.com)

Constantinople, as Roma Nova, could now rival Old Rome because it encompassed seven hills and became another Eptalofos (meaning "seven hills" in Greek).

Almost simultaneously when the Huns under Attila were making aggressive raids, in 447 CE Constantinople was struck by a powerful earthquake, which destroyed large parts of the walls. Therefore, Theodosius II ordered the urban prefect Kyros of Panopolis to direct urgent repairs. He employed the city's "circus factions" to rebuild and strengthen the fortifications, and they succeeded in restoring the walls within 60 days. It is when a second outer wall, about eight meters high, was added in front of the original wall, along with a wide ditch divided in sections. The ditch could be filled with water. The number of towers was doubled, so that there were now 192 of them. Two inscriptions in Greek and Latin near the Rhegium Gate (present-day Mevlevihane) testify to the construction. The third, low wall and the moat were created later. A final addition was the wall around the Blachernae Palace, hastily built before the Avars' siege of Constantinople in 627 CE.

The walls were built in two lines of defense with layers of stone and brick, adjoining the ditch. The two walls, inner and outer, had similar architectural structure. The inner wall ("Great Wall") was a solid construction, 5 meters thick and 12 meters high. Every 55 meters, the walls were strengthened with one tower, for a total of 96 towers. Each tower was 18 to 20 meters tall, mainly square but also hexagonal or octagonal,

with a battlemented terrace on the top. The tower's interior was usually divided by a floor in two chambers. The purpose of the lower chamber was storage, so it was opened to the city. The upper chamber had windows with a military function, either for viewing or firing projectiles, and it was accessible from the wall's walkway. Access to the walls was provided by large ramps along their side.

The outer wall was built at the distance of 15 to 20 meters from the main walls. The space created between them is known as *perivolos*. The outer wall was 2 meters thick at its bottom and had arched chambers at the level of the *perivolos*. The structure was eight and a half meters high with a battlemented walkway on the top. To access the outer wall from the city, either the main gates or small posterns at the bottom of the inner wall's towers were used. The outer wall equally had 96 squared or semicircular towers, and they were situated in the middle distance between the inner wall's towers. Each tower, again, had a room with windows on the level of the *perivolos*, with a battlemented terrace on top. Their lower sections were either solid or had small posterns to provide access to the outer terrace, called *parateichion*. It is where a paved road was built encompassing the walls. At about 15 meters from the outer wall was a moat. The moat itself was about 20 meters wide and 10 meters deep, and offered a flooding option. A meter-and-a-half-tall crenellated wall on the inner side of the moat served as a first line of defense. This was actually a third, so-called low wall.

The walls contained 10 main gates providing access to the city and a certain number of small ones, which were usually blocked under the threat of a siege. Of the 10 gates, 5 were public, and they conducted over the moat to bridges. The remaining 5 so-called "Military Gates" connected the outer sections of the walls, and they were recognized by their numbers. In arrangement, from north to south, were the Circus Gate, named after a nearby wooden amphitheater; the Gate of Charisius, the Fifth Military Gate; the Gate of Saint Romanus, the Fourth Military Gate; the Gate of the Rhegium, the Third Military Gate; the Selymbria Gate or Gate of the Spring, named after a well first venerated by the pagans and then converted into a Christian sanctuary, the Live Giving Spring; the Second Military Gate; the Golden Gate, the most celebrated and most important gate; and the First Military Gate, known as the Gate of Christ due to a Christogram (graphic symbol of Christ) on top of it.

The Walls of Theodosius were a massive, impregnable defense system for many years. They resisted several prolonged sieges, by the Avars, the Arabs, the Rus', and the Bulgarians. However, after the Crusades, the empire was unable to endure. When the Ottomans attacked the city using cannons, the walls of Constantinople were not helpful. On May 29, 1453 CE, the Gate of Saint Romanus was destroyed by artillery, the garrison of the Circus Gate was seized, and the Fifth Military Gate was stormed by the Turks. The city was finally captured, marking the end of the Byzantine Empire.

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See also: *Government and Politics*: Factions, Political; *Individuals*: Constantine the Great; Theodosius II; *Groups and Organizations*: Political Parties; *Key Events*: Constantinople, Siege and Fall of; *Key Places*: Golden Gate (Constantinople)

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Primary Documents

I. BASIL THE GREAT ON CENOBITIC MONASTICISM (FOURTH CENTURY)

Early Byzantine monks were highly esteemed for their lives of extreme asceticism, their withdrawal from the temptations of the world, their fostering of virtues and avoidance of vices, and their pursuit of spiritual perfection. The various types of monasticism included anchorites or eremites, living solitary lives in the deserts of Egypt, the Sinai Peninsula, and Syria, avoiding all contact with the vices of a corrupt world. Cenobites lived together in a community under a rule and an abbot (i.e., the spiritual leader of the community), doing everything in imitation of and for the love of Christ. A third type of monks were the Sarabaites, who lived under no abbot or rule and, rather than surrender their will to Christ, preferred to follow their own interests. A fourth type were the gyrovagues, who wandered from community to community receiving much but giving nothing in return. In the following excerpt from his rule for monks, Saint Basil (ca. 330–379 CE) describes the spiritual advantages of cenobitic monasticism over all other types.

Rule of St. Basil, Question 3

I observe that to lead a life in common with those of the same will and purpose is of advantage in many ways. First, even in regard to bodily needs and the provision of sustenance, not one of us suffices for himself alone, and so for those things which are necessary for the provision of our life we need our tasks to be for one another. Just as the foot of a man has use of its own powers, yet has need of others, and without the aid of the other limbs could neither fulfil its own task nor suffice with its own powers, so also this is what happens, it seems to me, in the solitary life, since what it has cannot be of use and what it lacks it cannot obtain. Besides, the very character of love does not allow an individual to seek his own interests, for the Apostle says, *Love seeks not its own* (1 Cor 13:4).

Second, the individual does not easily recognize his own faults and vices since there is no one to reprove him and it can easily happen to such a man as it is written: Woe to one alone, for if he falls there is none else to raise him up (Eccl 4:10). Moreover, the commandments are more easily fulfilled by the many, but by someone alone, when one commandment appears to have been fulfilled, another is hindered. For how

do you think that one alone shall *visit the sick or else welcome the stranger* (Matt 25:36, 35). But if *we all are the body of Christ and each members of the other* (Rom 12:5), then we ought to be fitted and joined together through our harmony into the compact of one body in the Holy Spirit. But if each of us chooses the solitary life, that is, for no cause or principle that is pleasing to God or that pertains to that common dispensation of others, but to satisfy one's own will and passion, how could we, thus split off and divided, fulfil and apply that harmonious relation of the members towards each another?

Source: Silvas, Anna M., trans. *The Rule of St. Basil in Latin and English: A Revised Critical Edition*, p. 77. Copyright 2013 by Order of Saint Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN. Used with permission.

2. THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE (312 CE)

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity was arguably the most important turning point in history. As the first Christian Roman emperor, he ended the persecutions and gave legal status to all Christians, guaranteeing the success of one of the most powerful and charismatic institutions in world civilization, the Christian Church. But the nature of his conversion has been endlessly debated and still remains a controversial issue. Traditionally, according to the accounts of the Christian priest and close adviser of Constantine, Lactantius (ca. 240–ca. 320 CE), and Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, Constantine saw a heavenly vision superimposed on the sun with the words "in hoc signo vinces" *(by this sign you will conquer) prior to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 CE. Later that night, Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream telling him to put the heavenly sign on the shields of his soldiers. Whatever Constantine may have seen is not as important as how it was interpreted. In the following excerpt from his "On the Deaths of the Persecutors," Lactantius describes the dream and vision, relating how Constantine, heavily outnumbered but armed with divine protection, utterly defeated his rival Maxentius, thereby becoming master of the entire Western Roman Empire.*

Constantine was advised in a dream to mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields of his soldiers and then engage in battle. He did as he was commanded and by means of a slanted letter X with the top of its head bent round, he marked Christ on their shields. Armed with this sign, the army took up its weapons. They enemy came to meet them with their emperor and crossed the bridge. The lines clashed, their fronts of equal strength, and both sides fought with the most extreme ferocity; "no flight was marked on one side or the other."

In the city there was a riot, and the emperor was blamed for betraying the safety of the state; then suddenly, while Maxentius was giving the games to celebrate his anniversary, the people shouted with one voice: "Constantine cannot be conquered." Shattered by this utterance, Maxentius tore himself away, and after calling together some

of the senators, he ordered the Sibylline books (books that foretold the future) to be inspected; in these it was discovered that "on that day the enemy of the Romans would perish." Led by this reply to hope for victory, Maxentius marched out to battle. The bridge was cut down behind him. At the sight of this, the fighting became tougher, and the Hand of God was over the battle-line. The army of Maxentius was seized with terror, and he himself fled in haste to the bridge which had been broken down; pressed by the mass of fugitives, he fell into the Tiber River and drowned. With this bitterest of wars at last finished, Constantine was received as emperor with great joy by the senate and people of Rome.

Source: Eusebius Pamphilius. *Life of Constantine*. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, series 2, vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Ware. Translated by Ernest Cushing Richardson. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1890, chap. 28, p. 1180.

3. CONSTANTINE EXEMPTS MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CLERGY FROM COMPULSORY PUBLIC DUTIES (313 CE)

During the reign of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE), as the emperor granted more and more privileges to the Christian Church, exemptions once granted to pagan priests were now also extended to the Christian clergy. One such privilege provided an exemption from compulsory public duties—for example, sitting as members of local city councils, whose duties included protection and maintenance of the city; bearing expenses for emperors and their companions when they visited the city; and paying taxes when inhabitants of the city were unable to do so. In his History of the Church, *written about 315 CE, Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea reproduces Constantine's edict. In this legal document, Constantine, recognizing the burden such duties placed on the spiritual responsibilities of the Christian clergy, and the dangers of calling down God's wrath if the clergy neglect the divine service, orders Anulinus, his governor in the Roman province of Africa, to exempt the clergy from serving as curators (city councilmen), giving full justification for his actions.*

Greeting, Anulinus, Your Excellency.

Many facts combine to prove that the sad neglect of religious observances, by which the highest reverence for the most holy, heavenly Power is preserved, has brought great dangers upon the community, and that the lawful restoration and preservation of the same has conferred the greatest good fortune on the Roman name, and wonderful prosperity on all mankind—blessings conferred by divine benevolence. I have accordingly decided that those men who with due holiness and constant attention to this law give their services to the conduct of divine worship shall receive the rewards of their own labours, Anulinus, Your Excellency. So in the province entrusted to you, in the Catholic church over which Caecilian presides, I desire those who give their services to those sacred observances—the people commonly known as clergymen—once and

for all to be kept entirely free from all public duties. This will ensure that by no error or sacrilegious fall from grace will they be drawn away from the worship owed to the Godhead; rather will they be completely free to serve their own law at all times. In thus rendering wholehearted service to the Deity, it is evidence that will be making an immense contribution to the welfare of the community.

Source: Cruse, Christian Frederick, trans. In *History of the Church* by Eusebius Pamphilus. New York: Thomas N. Stanford, 1854, pp. 432–433, Book 10, Chap. 7, p. 327.

4. LACTANTIUS: THE EDICT OF MILAN (313 CE)

The Edict of Milan, issued in 313 CE, was a joint venture by Constantine, Augustus of the Western Roman Empire, and Licinius, Augustus of the East. Probably inspired by Lactantius, the Christian priest and tutor of Constantine's eldest son, Crispus, it ended religious persecution of Christians, legalizing their religion and awarding them equal status with all other religions of the empire. Although the edict's language did not specifically favor Christians, it did provide a legal basis for the survival and future success of Christianity. Lactantius, in his book On the Deaths of the Persecutors, *which chronicles the actions of persecuting emperors and their ultimate divine punishment, relates this first step in the ultimate triumph of the Christian Church.*

When I , Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus, happily met at Milan and had under consideration all matters which concern the public advantage and safety, we thought that, among all the other things that we saw would benefit the majority of men, the arrangements which above all needed to made were those which assured reverence for the Divinity, so that we might grant both to Christians and to all men freedom to follow whatever religion each one wished, in order that whatever divinity there is in the seat of heaven may be appeased and made propitious towards us and towards all who have been set under our power. We thought therefore that in accordance with salutary and most correct reasoning we ought to follow the policy of regarding this opportunity as one not to be denied to anyone at all, whether he wished to give his mind to the observances of the Christians or to that religion which he felt was most fitting to himself, so that the supreme Divinity, whose religion we obey with free minds, may be able to show in all matters his accustomed favour and benevolence towards us. For this reason we wish your Devotedness to know that we have resolved that, all the conditions which were contained in letters previously sent to your office about the Christian name being completely set aside, those measures should be repealed which seemed utterly inauspicious and foreign to our clemency, and that each individual one of those who share the same wish to observe the religion of the Christians should freely and straightforwardly hasten to do so without any anxiety or interference.

Source: Fletcher, William, trans. Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*. In *The Works of Lactantius*. Vol. 2. Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1871, ch. 48.2, pp. 207–209.

5. CONSTANTINE RESTRICTS THE ENTRANCE OF *DECURIONES* (CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS) INTO THE RANKS OF THE CLERGY (329 CE)

In 313 CE, Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) exempted members of the Christian clergy from serving as members of municipal councils. But serious abuses had arisen as a result of this practice. The rich and powerful on the councils, instead of using their money and influence to meet the needs of the city, were joining the ranks of the clergy in record numbers, while many were falsely claiming clerical status to quality for the exemption. In the following edict from 329 CE, Constantine, recognizing that the abuse of this practice not only displeased God but also placed an enormous economic strain on the resources of the empire, placed severe restrictions on the rich and powerful entering the ranks of the Christian clergy.

Exemption from compulsory public services shall not be granted by popular consent, nor shall it be granted indiscriminately to all who petition under the pretext of being clerics, nor shall great numbers be added to the clergy rashly and beyond measure, but rather when a cleric dies, another shall be selected to replace the deceased, one who has no kinship with a Decurion family and who has not the wealth of resources whereby he may very easily support the compulsory public duties.

Thus, if there should be a dispute about the name of any person between a municipality and the clergy, if equity claims him for public service and if he be considered suitable for membership in the municipal council because of wealth or family connections, he shall be removed from the clergy and shall be delivered to the municipality. For the wealthy must assume secular obligations and the poor must be supported by the wealth of the churches.

Posted on the kalends of June in the year of the seventh consulship of Constantine Augustus and the consulship of Constantine Caesar, June 1, 329.

Source: Pharr, Clyde, trans. *The Theodosian Code*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952, 16.2.6, p. 451. Republished with permission of Princeton University Press; permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center Inc.

6. AN IMPERIAL CONSTITUTION OF CONSTANTINE ALLOWING BISHOPS JURISDICTION OVER SECULAR COURTS (333 CE)

In 429 CE, Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450 CE) appointed a commission of legal experts to organize all previous imperial legal enactments from Constantine I (beginning in 312 CE) to his own time and place them into one text. The project was completed in 438 CE and was valid for both the Western and Eastern Empires. The Theodosian Code, as it came to be called, was one of the most important legal documents in history and is an invaluable source for the political, social, economic, and religious history of the Later

Roman Empire. The code is especially important for the record it gives us of the relations between Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) and Christianity. As the code reflects, Constantine, in attempting to bring unity to the Roman state, perhaps unknowingly took the first step in the merger between church and state by allowing bishops jurisdiction over secular courts, thereby blurring the distinction between the Christian Church and the Roman state, a classic characteristic of the Middle Ages. Prior to this, secular and ecclesiastical courts were separate; bishops could try cases only between clerics. In the following imperial constitution from 333 CE, Constantine legislates on this important development.

Emperor Constantine Augustus to Ablavius, Praetorian Prefect:

We are very surprised that you who are just and a Catholic Christian should have wished to ask us what we had previously ordered or what we now wish to be observed concerning the judicial decisions of bishops, O Ablavius, dearest and most beloved father. For we previously decreed that any judicial decisions of bishops must be considered absolute and final, and whatever has been settled by the judicial decisions of bishops shall be considered as forever holy and sacred.

Therefore, if any man, either as a defendant or plaintiff should be pursuing a case in a secular court, if at the beginning of the case, or after the time limits have lapsed, or when the final pleadings are made or even when the judge is about to pronounce sentence, should decide to take the case to the bishop's court, even if the other person is unwilling, both parties must be sent to the bishop's court where the final decision will be made. Once this is done, there is no appeal from the bishop's decision and the secular judge cannot question the episcopal verdict, merely accept it.

Given on the third day before the Nones of May at Constantinople in the year of the consulship of Dalmatius and Zenophilus, May 5, 333.

Source: Pharr, Clyde, trans. *The Theodosian Code*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952, Sirmondian Constitutions, Title 1, p. 487. Republished with permission of Princeton University Press; permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center Inc.

7. HOLY RELICS: SAINT HELENA FINDS THE TRUE CROSS (337 CE) AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE HOLY LANCE (1098)

Holy relics, believed to have possessed miraculous protective and curative powers, formed a significant element in the spiritual beliefs of the Byzantines. The most venerated ones included those that dated back to the very dawn of Christian history and the passion of Christ—such as the spear that pierced the side of Christ, spikes from the crown of thorns, relics of the true cross, and the divine blood of the savior. Additionally, the Byzantines venerated relics of the holy mother of God, including her robe and girdle. The Virgin Hodregretia (the virgin who leads the way), an icon of the blessed mother of Christ, was believed to possess extraordinary curative powers and served as the special protectress of the city of Constantinople.

The early legends that arose concerning the discovery of these holy objects were almost as miraculous as the relics themselves. Theodoret (ca. 393–ca. 458 CE) and Robert the Monk (d. 1122) chronicle the discoveries of two of the most venerated relics-—the true cross and the holy lance. In the first excerpt below, the fifth-century CE historian Theodoret describes in his Ecclesiastical History *how St. Helena (ca. 250–ca. 330 CE), the mother of Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), and Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem (d. 335 CE) discovered the true cross through divine intervention. In the second excerpt, Robert the Monk, in his contemporary account of the First Crusade, narrating the second siege of Antioch (1098) by the Muslim general Kerbogna, relates how a hermit named Peter witnessed a vision of the apostle Andrew, who disclosed the location of the holy lance. Emboldened by the divine power of the lance, the besieged crusaders on June 28, 1098, attacked and destroyed the Muslim army, thereby gaining control of the city of Antioch by divine intervention.*

Saint Helena Discovers the True Cross

The bearer of these letters was no less illustrious a personage than the mother of the emperor, even she who was glorious in her offspring, whose piety was celebrated by all; she who brought forth that great luminary and nurtured him in piety. She did not shrink from the fatigue of the journey on account of her extreme old age, but undertook it a little before her death, which occurred in her eightieth year.

When the empress beheld the place where the Saviour suffered, she immediately ordered the idolatrous temple, which had been there erected, to be destroyed, and the very earth on which it stood to be removed. When the tomb, which had been so long concealed, was discovered, three crosses were seen buried near the Lord's sepulcher. All held it as certain that one of these crosses was that of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the other two were those of the thieves who were crucified with him. Yet they could not discern to which of the three the Body of the Lord had been brought nigh, and which had received the outpouring of his precious Blood. But the wise and holy Macarius, the president of the city, resolved this question in the following manner. He caused a lady of rank, who had been long suffering from disease, to be touched by each of the crosses, with earnest prayer, and thus discerned the virtue residing in that of the Saviour. For the instant this cross was brought near the lady, it expelled the sore disease and made her whole.

The mother of the emperor, on learning the accomplishment of her desire, gave orders that a portion of the nails should be inserted in the royal helmet, in order that the head of her son might be preserved from the darts of his enemies. The other portion of the nails she ordered to be formed into the bridle of his horse, not only to ensure the safety of the emperor, but also to fulfil an ancient prophecy; for long before Zechariah, the prophet had predicted that "There shall be upon the bridles of the horses Holiness unto the Lord Almighty."

Source: Jackson, Blomfield, trans. *The Ecclesiastical History, Dialogues, and Letters of Theodoret.* In *A Select Library and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Second Series, Vol. 3.

Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1892, Book 1, Chapter 17, pp. 54–55.

The Vision of the Apostle Andrew and the Discovery of the Holy Lance

Divine goodness wanted to pile good on good, and cheer its miserable servants more and more. So a certain pilgrim happened to be there, called Peter, who spoke out about this vision: "O people of God and outstanding servants of the Lord, hear my voice and incline your ears to my words. During the siege of this city (Antioch), Saint Andrew appeared to me one night in a vision saying: Hear and understand me, honest man." I replied to him: "Who are you, my lord?" He replied: "I am Saint Andrew the Apostle. My son, when you have entered this city and have it in your power, go quickly to the Church of St. Peter and you will find there in a place I will show you the Lance which pierced the side of Our Saviour." That was all the Apostle said to me. So I did not have the courage to tell anybody else, thinking I had seen an empty vision, but last night he appeared to me again and said: "Come and I will show you the lance is hidden, just as I promised. Hurry to excavate it from the earth, because victory will come to those who carry it." And the holy Apostle showed me the place. "Come with me to see it and dig it up." His listeners were eager to run to the Church of St. Peter, but he added: "Saint Andrew orders you not to be afraid, but to confess and do penance for our sins, because five days from now you will triumph over your enemies." Then all gave glory to God, who stooped to console their troubles. They ran immediately to the Church of St. Peter, desperate to see the place where the lance was to be found.

Chapter 3: The Holy Lance Is Discovered

Thirteen men dug there from dawn to dusk, and, by God's will, they found the Lance. The whole people rejoiced, loudly chanting the *Te Deum* and *Gloria in excelsis deo*. All swore unanimously that they would not flinch from any tribulation or from death, or give up on the journey to the Holy Sepulchre. The whole common mass rejoiced that its leaders had sworn this oath. They bolstered each other's courage and gloried in the prospect of divine help which each of them faithfully expected.

Source: Sweetenham, Carol. *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005, Book 7, Chapters 2–3, pp. 162–63. Reprinted with permission from Taylor & Francis Group, Informa UK Limited.

8. COUNCIL OF NICAEA: LETTER OF EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA TO HIS DIOCESE (350 CE)

In the early fourth century CE, a serious heresy arose within the ranks of the Christian Church. A priest in the Church of Alexandria, Egypt, named Arius spread about a religious belief that came to be known as Arianism, which would cause series divisions in the church for centuries. Basically, Arius taught that Christ the Son was not equal in divinity

to God, the Father, and he rejected the idea that Christ had no beginning and no end. For this doctrine, Arius was condemned by his superior, Bishop Alexander of Alexandria. Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), fearing that disunity and heresy in the church would bring down God's wrath on the empire, summoned a universal church council to meet at the city of Nicaea to settle the issue. At the council, over 200 bishops reached a decision confirmed by the emperor; that decision, which came to be known as the Nicene creed, is the accepted belief of the Catholic Church today. The council condemned Arianism, declaring that the Father and Son were equal in power, glory, and dignity and that Christ had no beginning and no end. From that time forward, the Son was called the Word of God. Present at the council was Constantine's adviser and friend Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 263–ca. 339 CE). The following is a selection from a letter Eusebius sent to the members of his churches in Palestine telling them about the decisions of the council.

What happened concerning the faith of the Church at the Great Council assembled at Nicaea, You have probably already learned, Beloved, from other sources rumours usually preceding the accurate account of what actually was agreed upon. But lest in such reports the circumstances of the decisions of the Council should be misunderstood, we thought it necessary to send to you first, the formula of the faith presented by us and next, the second, which the Fathers put forth with some additions to our words. Our own paper then, which was read in the presence of our most pious Emperor, and declared to be good and just, ran like this:

> "We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible and In One Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Son Only-begotten, first-born of every creature, before all the ages, begotten from Father, by whom also all things were made; who for our salvation was made flesh, and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. And those who say, 'Once He was not,' and 'Before His generation He was not,' and 'He came to be from nothing,' or those who pretend the Son of God is 'Of other substance than the Father, or 'created,' the Catholic Church anathematizes." [Eusebius here means that anyone not believing this will be condemned by the Church and their immortal soul will be in danger].

Source: Newman, John Henry, trans. "Eusebius of Caesarea's Letter to the People of His Diocese on the Formulation of the Nicene Creed." In *Select Treatises of S. Athanasius Archbishop of Alexandria in Controversy with the Arians.* Oxford: James Parker, 1877, p. 59.

9. THEODORET DESCRIBES JULIAN THE APOSTATE'S EDICT FORBIDDING CHRISTIANS TO TEACH THE CLASSICS (362 CE)

Julian the Apostate, a nephew of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE), was sole ruler of the Roman Empire from 361–363 CE. Julian was called the Apostate because unlike the emperors immediately before him (the sons of Constantine were Christian), Julian

suddenly decided to abandon Christianity and worship the old gods again. He reopened pagan temples that had been closed by Christian emperors and took away privileges and exemptions from the Christian clergy, giving them to pagan priests instead. In spite of this, Julian did not openly persecute Christians, not in the beginning at least. He even passed an edict of toleration in 362 CE allowing all citizens to follow any religion they chose, although, as some historians have noted, Julian deliberately did this knowing that Christians could not agree on many religious issues and would soon be at each other's throats, causing Christianity to self-destruct. When this failed, Julian decided to beat the Christians at their own game. Knowing that Christians were well organized and attracted converts by their good moral behavior and care for the poor and sick, Julian ordered his chief priests to do the same. When this also was unsuccessful, Julian turned to more aggressive measures. Knowing that many Christians made a living by teaching the classics but also used them to understand the scriptures better and to explain to potential converts the benefits of Christianity (the similarities, for instance, between the teachings of Plato and Christ attracted many to Christianity, Saint Augustine of Hippo being the most famous example), Julian in 362 CE put his plan into operation. In the following selection from his fifth-century church history, the historian Theodoret (ca. 393–ca. 458 CE) attempts to give the emperor's reasons for doing so.

Countless other deeds were dared at that time by land and by sea, all over the world, by the wicked against the just, for now without disguise the enemy of God began to lay down laws against true religion. First of all he prohibited the sons of the Galileans, for so he tried to name the worshippers of the Saviour, from taking part in the study of poetry, rhetoric and philosophy, for said he, in the words of the proverb "we are shot with shafts feathered from our own wing," for from our own books they take arms and wage war against us.

Source: Jackson, Blomfield, trans. *The Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second series, vol. 3. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1892, 3.4; p. 97.

10. SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS DESCRIBES HOW CHRISTIANS EVADED JULIAN THE APOSTATE'S EDICT AGAINST CHRISTIANS TEACHING THE CLASSICS (363 CE)

In his edict directed against Christians teaching the classics, Julian (r. 361–363 CE) hoped by shutting down Christian schools to reduce the Christian elite and their children to poverty, block their way to important government careers, and rob them of the tools they needed to understand and spread their religion. But fate decided otherwise. Julian died suddenly in 363 CE while fighting the Persians on the empire's eastern frontier, while his successor, Jovian, a Catholic Christian, reversed all Julian's anti-Christian legislation. Even committed pagans like the contemporary historian Ammianus

Marcellinus (ca. 330–ca. 391 CE), an officer who served under Julian, saw his education edict as the most unjust law passed during his short reign. Even during Julian's lifetime, Christians managed to evade Julian's edict by combining rhetoric, poetry, and philosophy with Christian subjects in a very clever manner, without breaking Julian's law. In this document, the fifth-century church historian, Socrates Scholasticus (ca. 380–ca. 439 CE), describes the efforts of a father and son, both called Apollinaris, to put this plan into operation.

Both being skilled in polite learning, the father as an expert in grammar and the son skilled in the art of public speaking, made themselves available to the Christians during this time of crisis. The father composed a grammar consistent with the Christian faith, he also translated the Book of Moses into heroic verse, and paraphrased all the historical books of the Old Testament, putting them partly in the form of poetry, and partly reducing them to the form of Greek tragedy. On purpose, he used all kinds of verse, so that no form of expression known to the Greek language might be unknown or unheard of among the Christians. The son who was well trained in persuasive speaking explained the Gospels, and teachings of the Apostles in the form of dialogues as Plato had done for the Greeks. Thus showing themselves useful to the Christian cause, they overcame the Emperor's shrewd attacks on the faith through their own labors.

Source: Gwynn, David M., trans. *Socrates Scholasticus, The Church History in Christianity in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook.* New York: Bloomberg, 2015, 3.16, pp. 157–158. Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

II. BATTLE OF ADRIANOPLE (378 CE)

In 364 CE, two brothers ruled a still-undivided Roman Empire. Valentinian I (r. 364–375 CE), a Catholic Christian, was in control of the West; he appointed his younger brother Valens (r. 364–378 CE), an Arian Christian, emperor in the East. During Valens's reign, a Germanic people known as the Visigoths, pushed eastward by the nomadic Huns (who later invaded the Western Empire under their famous king, Attila), sought asylum in Valens's territories. The emperor granted their request. Unfortunately, corrupt Roman officials treated the Visigoths so badly and taxed them so unjustly that they were reduced to selling their own children into slavery. As a result, the Visigoths rebelled against Valens, forcing him to meet them in battle at Adrianople in the Eastern province of Thrace. Rather than wait for aid from the Western emperor, Gratian (r. 367–383 CE), who had succeeded his father, Valentinian I, Valens, eager for glory, faced the Visigoths alone and suffered one of the worst military defeats in Roman history. Surrounding Valens's infantry with their cavalry, the Visigoths utterly destroyed the Roman army, even killing the emperor himself. In this account, the fifth-century church historian Theodoret (ca. 393–ca. 458 CE) describes the battle and explains the defeat as a result of divine punishment for Valens's heretical Arian beliefs.

Valens, however, ignored these excellent advisors and sent out his troops to join battle while he himself sat waiting in a nearby house for the victory. His troops could not stand against the barbarians' charge; turned tail and were slain one after another as they fled, the Romans fleeing at full speed and the barbarians chasing them with all their might. When Valens heard of the defeat, he attempted to hide in the village where he lay, but when the barbarians came up, they set the place on fire and together with it, burned the enemy of God. Thus in this present life, Valens paid the penalty of his (religious) errors.

Source: Jackson, Blomfield, trans. *The Church History of Theodoret*, 4.32. In Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, vol. 3. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1892, pp. 130–31.

12. FIRST COUNCIL OF EPHESUS: THE CONDEMNATION OF NESTORIUS (431 CE)

In the church of the Byzantine Empire, many religious beliefs arose that rejected official church teachings and caused many divisions within that sacred institution. Most if not all of these unorthodox beliefs were Christological (i.e., beliefs relating to the nature of Christ) and were usually debated and condemned by universal church councils. Followers of Arianism believed Christ the Son was subordinate to God the Father. Monophysites believed Christ had only one nature, the divine, while official church teaching as declared by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE stated that Christ had two natures, fully human and fully divine, united in one body. The belief that Mary was not Theotokos (bearer of God) but Christotokos (bearer of Christ) was held by Nestorius (386–450 CE), patriarch of Constantinople, but condemned by Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (376–444 CE) at the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE. Cyril declared that Nestorius's belief implied that since Mary was not the Mother of God, then Christ himself was not God (although it is clear that Nestorius never denied the divinity of Christ). In the first selection below, the Council of Ephesus condemns Nestorius, removing him from office, and in the second selection below, Cyril warns the monks of Egypt not to pay attention to Nestorius's false teaching.

Decree of the Council against Nestorius

As, in addition to other things, the wicked Nestorius has not obeyed our summons, and did not receive the holy bishops who were sent by us to him, we were forced to examine his ungodly beliefs. We discovered that he had hold and published these ungodly beliefs in his letters and other writings, as well as in speeches which he delivered in this city, and which we have witnesses. Forced therefore by church law and by the letter of our most holy father and fellow-servant Coelestine, the Roman bishop (interestingly enough, the Council is confirming Pope Coelestine's authority over the

entire church), the Roman bishop, we have come, with many tears, to this sorrowful sentence against him, namely, that our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has sinned against, orders though this holy church council that Nestorius be excluded from the dignity of his office and from all priestly communion.

Source: Percival, H. R., trans. *Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.* Second Series, Vol. 14. Edited by P. Schaff and H. Wace. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1900, p. 218.

Letter of Bishop Cyril of Alexandria Warning the Monks of Egypt to Avoid the False Teachings of Nestorius

Therefore, I am amazed if some should question at all whether the Holy Virgin should be called the Mother of God. For if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, how is the Holy Virgin who bore him not the Mother of God? The disciples passed this down to us, even if they had not mentioned the term. So we have been taught to think by the Holy Fathers. And, in any event, our father Athanasius, of sainted memory, sat on the throne of the Church of Alexandria for forty-six years used his great and unchallenged knowledge of the teachings of the Apostles against the empty talk of the godless heretics and greatly gladdened the world with his teachings and all bear witness to the accuracy and holiness of his teachings.

When he composed for us his work on the holy Trinity, in the third book from beginning to the end, he called the Holy Virgin the Mother of God. I shall, of necessity, use his own very words which ae as follows: "Therefore the characteristic of Holy Scripture, as we have often said, is this that contains two statements about the Saviour, that he both always was God and he is the Son, being the Word and brightness and wisdom of the Father and that afterwards, for our sake, by taking flesh from the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, he became man."

Source: McEnerney, John I., trans. *The Fathers of the Church: St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letters 1–50.* Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985, Vol. 75; I, pp. 15–16. Republished with permission of Catholic University of America Press; permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center Inc.

13. POPE GELASIUS I ON SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL POWER (494 CE)

Ever since Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) established Constantinople in 330 CE, emperors and popes had clashed over spiritual supremacy in the universal church. Pope Gelasius I (r. 494–496 CE) developed one of the most articulate arguments for the supremacy of spiritual over temporal rulers. In the following letter dated 494 CE to the emperor Anastasius I (r. 491–518 CE), Gelasius argues that since the clergy had to render an account to

God for the sins of temporal rulers on the day of judgment, priestly authority is more weighty than temporal. This idea represented a clear attempt to bring all of Christendom under the spiritual authority of the Bishop of Rome.

There are two powers, august Emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled, namely, the sacred authority of the priests and the royal power. Of these that of the priests is the more weighty, since they have to render an account for even the kings of men in the divine judgment. You are also aware, dear son, that while you are permitted honorably to rule of human kind, yet in things divine you bow your head humbly before the leaders of the clergy and await from their hands the means of your salvation. In the reception and proper disposition of the heavenly mysteries you recognize that you should be subordinate rather than superior to the religious order, and that in these matters you depend on their judgment rather than wish to force them to follow your will.

If the ministers of religion, recognizing the supremacy granted you from heaven in matters affecting the public order, obey your laws, lest otherwise they might obstruct the course of secular affairs by irrelevant considerations, with what readiness should you not yield them obedience to whom is assigned the dispensing of the sacred mysteries of religion. Accordingly, just as there is no slight danger in the case of the priests if they refrain from speaking when the service of the divinity requires, so there is no little risk for those who disdain which God forbid when they should obey. And if it is fitting that the hearts of the faithful should submit to all priests in general who properly administer divine affairs, how much the more is obedience due to the bishop of that see which the Most High ordained to be above all others, and which is consequently dutifully honored by the devotion of the whole Church.

Source: Robinson, J. H., trans. "Gelasius I on Spiritual and Temporal Power (494)." In *Readings in European History*. Boston: Ginn, 1904, pp. 72–73.

14. PROCOPIUS ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EMPEROR JUSTINIAN'S CONDEMNATION OF CHRISTIAN HERESIES (SIXTH CENTURY)

As God's representative on earth, the emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) believed it was his duty to interpret and enforce church teachings established at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. At the same time, Justinian felt God had given him a mission to seek out and eliminate heresy (i.e., any religious belief that conflicted with the faith as established at Nicaea). Unfortunately, this belief caused serious religious disputes; it put Justinian in conflict with the Roman pope and even with his own bishops, who did not recognize his right to interfere in church affairs. But as the contemporary historian Procopius (ca. 500–ca. 554 CE) points out in his Secret History, *it could also cause serious political and economic problems.*

Throughout the Roman Empire there are many Christian doctrines that have been officially condemned and which they are accustomed to call heresies. All who followed

these heresies, he ordered to renounce their traditional beliefs, threatening those who would disobey with many legal punishments, in particular that they would no longer enjoy the right to leave their property to their children and relatives. Now it happens that the churches of these so-called heretics, and especially those that followed the doctrine of Areios (Arius whose belief was condemned at the Council of Nicaea), possessed unheard riches. Not the entire Senate itself nor any other major group within the Roman Empire could be compared to these churches when it came to wealth. For they had treasures of gold and silver ornamented with precious stones beyond anyone's power to describe or count; they owned houses and villages in huge numbers, much land in all parts of the world, and every kind of wealth one can imagine that actually exists and has a name among all of mankind. This was because not one of the emperors who ruled in the past had yet disturbed their property. In fact, a large number of people, including many who were orthodox (followed Nicene Christianity), derived their entire livelihood by working for these sects, and justified it by saying that they were only during their job. So, to begin with, by confiscating the assets of these churches the emperor Justinian deprived them suddenly of all their money, with the result that many people were at that time cut off from their livelihood.

Source: Procopius. *The Secret History of the Court of Justinian*. Athens: Privately printed for the Athenian Society, 1896, Book 2, Chapter 1.

15. AGAPETUS COUNSELS JUSTINIAN ON THE PROPER CONDUCT OF CHRISTIAN RULERS (SIXTH CENTURY)

Efforts to teach medieval rulers the importance of imitating Christ in their actions by treating their subjects with justice and equity, doing good works, and ensuring the salvation of their people resulted in the production of "mirrors of princes," manuals written primarily by ecclesiastics to instruct kings and emperors in proper Christian conduct. Drawn primarily from scriptures, the church Fathers, and monastic sources, these manuals taught rulers the importance of fostering virtues and avoiding vices and of ruling responsibly in accordance with heavenly mandates. Such manuals appeared regularly in both the medieval Latin West and the Byzantine Empire. In the following passages from the deacon Agapetus's advice to the emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE), the author offers the emperor guidance on how he may please God by doing good works and ensuring that his judges dispense just and impartial judgments.

The Exposition by Agapetus, deacon of the most holy Great Church of God of heads of advice to the Emperor Justinian.

Chapter 30

Having been entrusted by God with the empire of the world, do not employ wicked men in the administration of affairs. For all the evil that they do, he who has given

them the power will have to render his account to God. Let the advancement of officials, therefore, come about in conjunction with their close scrutiny.

Chapter 37

He who has attained great authority, let him imitate the giver of that authority according to his ability. For he bears in some way the image of God, who is above all, and through Him possesses rule over all, and in this he will best imitate God if he thinks nothing is to be preferred to mercy.

Chapter 38

Let us store up for ourselves the wealth of good works beyond gold and precious stones. This both delights us here with the hope of future enjoyment, and there sweetens us with the experience of the hoped for blessedness. Since what now surrounds us is nothing to us, let it not give us pleasure.

Chapter 41

Do not distinguish between your friends and foes when giving judgment. Neither favour those who wish you well on account of their well wishing, nor resist those who are enemies because of their hatred. It is equally absurd to give a favourable verdict to the unjust man, even though he is an enemy. The evil is the same in both cases, even if it is found in opposite circumstances.

Chapter 44

The wealth of good works is inexhaustible. It is acquired in giving; it is collected through their dispersal. With this wealth in your soul, most magnificent emperor, give liberally to all who ask of you, for you will receive infinite reward when the moment comes for repayment of your deeds.

Chapter 45

Having obtained your kingship by God's command, imitate Him through good works, since you were born amongst those able to do good, and you are not amongst those who seek to receive good. The availability of an abundance of wealth means there is no obstacle to good works for the poor.

Source: Agapetus. *Advice to the Emperor in Three Political Voices from the Age of Justinian*. Translated by Peter N. Bell. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009, pp. 100, 110–114. Reprinted with permission of Liverpool University Press.

16. EMPEROR ANASTASIUS I AWARDS CLOVIS THE TITLES OF CONSUL AND PATRICIAN (508 CE)

The conversion of Clovis (ca. 481–509 CE), king of the Franks, to Catholic Christianity marked a decisive step in the formation of medieval Europe. It differentiated the Franks from other Arian (heretical) Christian Germanic rulers and created the establishment of an intimate bond between the Frankish and Roman people as well as between the Franks and the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time, the Franks attracted the attention of Catholic Christian Byzantine Emperor Anastasius I (r. 491–518 CE), who, hoping to unite the empire and the church under Byzantine control, resorted to the traditional practice of bestowing official Roman titles on Clovis, establishing him as a legitimate representative of the Byzantine Empire. In the following passage from his late sixth century History of the Franks, *Bishop Gregory of Tours (538–593 CE) relates how Emperor Anastasius conferred on Clovis the honorary titles of consul and patrician.*

Clovis received an appointment to the consulship from the emperor Anastasius, and in the church of the blessed Martin he clad himself in the purple tunic and chlamys, and placed a diadem on his head. Then he mounted his horse, and in the most generous manner he gave gold and silver as he passed along the way which is between the gate of the entrance [of the church of St. Martin] and the church of the city, scattering it among the people who were there with his own hand, and from that day he was called consul or Augustus. Leaving Tours he went to Paris and there he established the seat of his kingdom. There also Theodoric came to him.

Source: Gregory, Bishop of Tours. *History of the Franks*. Selections, translated with Notes by Brehaut Ernest, PhD, New York: Columbia University Press, 1916, No. 38.

17. PROCOPIUS' ACCOUNT OF EMPRESS THEODORA'S SPEECH DURING THE NIKA REVOLT (532 CE)

The Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) was clearly one of the most remarkable and accomplished Byzantine rulers. Attempting to imitate the glory of Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE), Justinian desired to reclaim the provinces of the former Western Roman Empire, reform Roman law, unite the Eastern and Western churches, and build on a lavish scale worthy of Constantine himself. It is said that Justinian's motto was "one empire, one church, one law and one emperor." Unfortunately, by spending years reconquering the western provinces of North Africa and Italy, Justinian ignored the Persian threat on his Eastern frontier, and drained the imperial treasury, forcing him to raise huge taxes, ruin the economy, and impoverish many of his subjects. A direct result of this was a serious and fearful rebellion that almost cost Justinian his throne. While Justinian was sitting in the imperial box in the Hippodrome (where horse races were held), the people, angered by Justinian's political decisions, suddenly rioted, shouting,

"Nika, Nika" ("conquer"). Justinian and the empress Theodora (ca. 500–548 CE) shut themselves up in the palace. Justinian wanted to flee the city, but Theodora was made of sterner stuff and convinced Justinian to stand his ground. Summoning two of his best generals, Belisarius (505–565 CE) and Moundas, the emperor ordered them to put down the revolt. Both generals led their soldiers against the rioters and, according to the contemporary historian Procopius, over 30,000 people lost their lives that day. In the following excerpt from his History of the Wars, *Procopius (ca. 500–ca. 554 CE) reproduces the speech of the strongwilled Theodora that turned almost certain defeat into victory.*

Those with the emperor were holding a meeting to decide whether it would be better for them to stay or to take to the ships in flight. Many speeches were made on either side. And Theodora the empress also spoke as follows. "The impropriety of a woman speaking boldly among the men or stirring up those who are filled with fear is hardly, I believe a matter that the present moment affords us the luxury of examining one way or another. For when you reach the point of supreme danger nothing else seems best other than to settle the matter at hand in the best possible way. I believe that flight, now more than ever, is not in our interest even if it should bring us to safety. For it is not possible for a man who is born not also to die, but for one who has ruled, it is intolerable to become a fugitive. May I never be parted from the purple! May I never live to see the day when I will be addressed as Mistress by all in my presence! Emperor, if you wish to save yourself, that is easily arranged. We have much money; there is the sea; and here are our ships. But consider whether, after you have saved yourself, you would then gladly exchange safety for death. For my part, I like that old saying, that kingship is a good burial shroud." (Here Theodora supposedly means that it is better to die a king than to live as a coward).

Source: Dewing, H. B., trans. *Procopius: History of the Wars,* I.24. London: McMillian, 1914, p. 219.

18. PROCOPIUS' DESCRIPTION OF HAGIA SOPHIA, CHURCH OF HOLY WISDOM (537 CE)

The Church of Hagia Sophia was truly one of the great architectural marvels of Byzantium. Completed by architects of Justinian (r. 527–565 CE) in 537 CE and constructed on the site of a previous church also called Hagia Sophia, which was destroyed by fire during the Nika revolt of 532 CE, Hagia Sophia was of great importance to both Christians and Muslims (it was converted into a mosque in 1453). The destruction of the old church gave Justinian an opportunity to construct a church that would be a fitting tribute to his ambitious building program. Justinian meant his new church to be a symbolic bridge between heaven and earth and hoped that the masses attending service there would be overwhelmed by the sacred structure. The contemporary Byzantine historian

Procopius's (ca. 500–ca. 554 CE) description of Hagia Sophia seems to indicate Justinian's success in raising a structure that would be a mirror image of heaven itself.

The whole ceiling is overland with pure gold, which adds glory to his beauty, yet the light reflected from the stones prevails, shining out to rival the gold. And there are two stoa-like colonnades (covered walkways supported by columns on each side of the aisle in the church), one on each side, not separated in any way from the structure of the church itself. The church also has ceilings of gold. One of these two colonnaded stoas has been assigned to men worshippers, while the other is reserved for women engaged in the same exercise. But they are basically the same, and do not differ from one another in any way, but their very equality serves to beautify the church, and their similarity to adorn it. And whenever anyone enters this church to pray, he understands at once that is not by any human power or skill, but by the influence of God that this work has been so finely done. And so his mind is lifted up toward God and exalted, feeling that He cannot be far away, but must especially love to dwell in this place which He has chosen. And this does not happen only to one who sees the church for the first time, but the same experience comes to him every time he enters the church, as though he was seeing this wondrous sight for the first time.

Source: Procopius, De Aedificiis. *The Church of St. Sophia Constantinople*. Translated by W. Lethabv and H. Swainson. New York: 1894, pp. 24–28.

19. THEOPHANES THE CONFESSOR DESCRIBES THE START OF THE ICONOCLASTIC CONTROVERSY (724 CE)

In 724 CE, the emperor Leo III (r. 717–741 CE) issued an edict ordering the destruction of all icons (i.e., images of the holy family and the saints), claiming they violated the Second Commandment (forbidding the worship of images) and insisting that his subjects were worshipping the images themselves as divine, not what they represented. This edict initiated what became known as the period of Iconoclasm in Byzantine history. This hatred of icons continued under Leo's son Constantine V (r. 741–774 CE). This controversy placed the Byzantine rulers in direct conflict with the Roman popes Gregory II (r. 715–731 CE) and Gregory III (r. 731–741 CE). Not only were the popes of the period Iconophiles (i.e., lovers of icons), but they also questioned the right of Byzantine rulers to decide matters of religious belief, creating a further division between the Eastern and Western churches. The position of Leo III and Constantine V especially angered the monks of the empire, who were strong supporters of icon worship, and especially the contemporary monastic chronicler Theophanes (ca. 758–ca. 817 CE). In the first selection below from his chronicle, Theophanes describes the beginning of the Iconoclastic Controversy, and in the second selection below from the chronicle, he portrays the emperors Leo and Constantine, because of what he considers their evil beliefs and

actions, as disrespectful to God, evil incarnate, and personally responsible for all the ills of society.

Leo III Declares War against Icons

In this year the impious Emperor began to frame an order condemning the august, holy icons. When Gregory, the pope at Rome learned this he stopped the tribute from Italy and Rome and wrote Leo a letter to the effect that is was not proper for the Emperor to issue a command concerning the faith or to make changes in the ancient beliefs of the church, which had been decided upon by the holy fathers.

The Wickedness of Leo and Constantine

Such evils as befall the Christians during the reign of the wicked Leo was made clear in previous chapters. There was rebellion in Italy because of his wicked beliefs, and there were earthquakes, famines, plagues, and popular revolts. I must keep silent over part of this, but it is important to set forth the illegal actions of his wicked and totally miserable son one after the other, as they were still more unholy and hateful to God. I do this in the spirit of one who loves truth since all powerful God is watching this and so it may be a clear aid for men in the future and for those wretched arrogant people who are now stumbling into the evil beliefs of this supreme lawbreaker. Constantine's actions were wickedly carried from the first year of his reign to the year of his end. For he was a totally destructive beast who used his power to totally ignore the law and to act like a tyrant. First he sided against our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, his totally pure mother and all the saints. He was deceived by magic, wickedness, and blood sacrifices. What can I say? When, with his wickedness, the altogether enemy of God took over his father's rule and from the beginning desired nothing but evil.

Source: Turtledove, Harry, ed. and trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes: Anni Mundi 6095–6305 (AD 602–813).* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982, pp. 95–96, 104–105. Reprinted with permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press.

20. "SPOILING THE EGYPTIANS": MILITARY STRATEGY IN THE *TACTICA* OF LEO VI (886–912 CE)

The idea of "spoiling the Egyptians" has its origins in the Old Testament Book of Exodus. When the Hebrews left Egypt for the promised land, God caused the Egyptians to favor the Israelites, who proceeded to relieve the Egyptians of their wealth. For the fourth century CE, Bishop Augustine of Hippo (modern-day Algeria) (354–430 CE), "spoiling the Egyptians" referred to using the knowledge of Greek and Roman classics to help Christians better understand the Holy Scriptures; it was for Augustine merely a means to an end to attain the proper interpretation of God's will. This tradition continued in the

Byzantine Empire in the employment of military strategy. It was common, primarily after major losses, to adopt the battle tactics of enemy forces or even to incorporate entire groups of specialized units into the Byzantine army to neutralize the military strategy of the enemy. In the first excerpt from his military manual, the Tactica, *the emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912 CE) advises his commanders to imitate the tactics of the Franks and Lombards, and in the second he explains how a recent defeat inflicted upon the Byzantine army by the Saracens could be reversed by the study and application of Saracen battle tactics.*

There are some nations, such as the Franks and the Lombards, who had formerly been bound by impiety, but have now embraced the true faith of the Christians. Some are friendly while others are subject to Our God-given Majesty. They have distinctive military practices, some of which are traditional among them, while others derive from actual usage. We are transmitting these to you, O general, not because of a military campaign against them—for how <could this be> when they are at peace and are allies, coreligionists, and subjects?—but in order that, from their usages and organization and, if necessary, from their adversaries, you may select whatever might seem useful to you and emulate them. And, when the time comes, you will be well practiced <in facing> absolutely any kind of enemy drawn up in formation against you . . .

In waging war against the Saracens of Syria dwelling near Mesopotamia, adopt the methods employed by the commander, who, a short time ago, recaptured Theodosioupolis, which had been occupied by them, and returned it to our dominion. The horses of the Romans are unaccustomed to camels and are even more frightened by the noise of drums and cymbals and they turn around <and move> to the rear. This tactic has often caused the Romans to rush into flight. It is necessary, then, to accustom the horses of the soldiers, especially those of the front line troops and their officers, to the noise of the drums and cymbals by using them in drills and also to have camels among them so they will not be scared by the sight of them. There are also other considerations that one could discover by careful investigation of present conditions.

Source: Dennis, George T, ed. and trans. "Battle Formations of the Romans and Various Peoples." In *Tactica of Leo VI from Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, Vol. 49. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2014, Constitution 18.74 and 18.134, 463–465; 489. Reprinted with permission.

21. EMPEROR CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYOGENITUS WARNS HIS SON NOT TO SHARE GREEK FIRE, A GIFT FROM GOD, WITH HERETICS AND NON-BELIEVERS (10TH CENTURY)

Since its foundation in 330 CE by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337 CE), Constantinople was able to survive many assaults against its walls. Only twice in its history did

Constantinople fall, once during the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and again when the Ottoman Turks captured the city in 1453 and ended the existence of the Byzantine Empire. Yet from 330 to 1204 CE, the city stood firm against such invaders as the Saracens, Huns, Bulgars, and Normans. How did the Byzantines accomplish this? One answer lies with the strength of the Byzantine navy, which used a secret weapon called "Greek fire," a flammable liquid that was pumped through tubes and then sprayed at enemy vessels, setting them on fire and completely destroying them. This weapon gave the Byzantines such an advantage over their opponents that they took severe measures not to let the secret leak out even to allies. So the Byzantines claimed that Greek fire was a gift from God, so that they alone could fight God's battles. They were therefore forbidden by the host of heaven to allow anyone else to use it. In his 10th-century manual on politics and diplomacy, written to guide the rule of his son, Romanus Lecapenus (r. 920–944 CE), Emperor Constantine VII Porphyogenitus (r. 913–959 CE) warns Romanus not to hand over the secret of this weapon to anyone and explains why.

Similar care and thought you must take in the matter of the liquid fire which is discharged through tubes, so that if any shall ever decide to demand this too, as they have often made demands of us also; you may dismiss them in words like these: "This too was revealed and taught by God through an angel to the great and holy Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and concerning this too he received great charges from the same angel, as we are assured by the faithful witness of our fathers and grandfathers, that it should be made among the Christians only and in the city ruled by them, and nowhere else at all, nor should it be sent nor taught to any other nation whatsoever. And so, for the confirmation of this among those who should come after him, this great emperor caused curses to be inscribed on the holy table (altar) of the church of God, that he who should dare to give of this fire to another nation should neither be called a Christian, not be held worthy of any rank or office; and if he should be the holder of any such, should be expelled therefrom and be anathematized and made an example for ever and ever, whether he were emperor, or patriarch, or any other man whatever, either ruler or subject, who should seek to break this commandment." And it happened once that one of our military governors, who had been heavily bribed by certain foreigners, handed over some of this fire to them; and, since God could not endure to leave unavenged this sin, as he was about to enter the holy church of God, fire came down out of heaven and devoured and consumed him completely. And thereafter mighty fear and terror were planted in the hearts of all men, and never since then has anyone, whether emperor, or noble, or private citizen or military governor, or any man of any sort whatsoever, even thought of such a thing, far less to attempt to do it or bring it to pass.

Source: Moravcsik, Gyula, ed., and Romilly J. H. Jenkins, trans. *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De administrando imperio.* Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016, pp. 69–70. Reprinted with permission.

22. CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITUS INSTRUCTS HIS SON ON THE BYZANTINE ART OF DIPLOMACY IN AN EXCERPT FROM HIS *DE ADMINISTRANDO IMPERIO* (950 CE)

Since its beginning in 330 CE, the Byzantine Empire was in an almost constant state of siege by numerous groups of people attempting to conquer imperial territory and Constantinople itself. Frequently, however, rather than directly confronting the invaders with their military resources, Byzantines resorted to subtle diplomacy to gain the desired result. This could take the form of bribes, gifts, flattery, marriage alliances, and religious conversion. In the first passage below from the De administrando imperio, *a secret manual written by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (born in the purple) (r. 913–959 CE), to instruct his son Romanus II (r. 959–963 CE) in the art of statecraft, the emperor describes the methods Romanus should use to make peace with the Pechenegs, a people living on the frontiers of the Byzantine province of Cherson (in modern-day southern Russia). In the second passage below, Constantine explains why diplomatic relations with the Pechenegs are so important for the safety and security of Byzantine imperial territory.*

De administrando imperio (Chapter I)

Of the Pechenegs, and how many advantages accrue from their being at peace with the emperor of the Romans.

Hear now my son, these things of which I think you should not be ignorant, and be wise that you may attain to government. For I maintain that while learning is a good things for the rest as well, who are subjects, yet it is especially so for you, who are bound to take thought for the safety of all, and to steer and guide the laden ship of the world. And if in setting out my subject I have followed the plain and beaten track of speech and, so to say, idly running and simple prose, do not wonder at that, my son. For I have not been studious to make a display of fine writing or of an Atticizing (classical Greek) style, swollen with the sublime and lofty, but rather have been eager of means of every day and conversational narrative to teach you those things of which I think you should not be ignorant, and which may without difficulty provide that intelligence and prudence which are the fruit of long experience.

I conceive, then, that it is always greatly to the advantage of the emperor of the Romans to be minded to keep the peace with the nation of the Pechenegs and to conclude conventions and treaties of friendship with them and to send every year to them from our side a diplomatic agent with presents suitable to that nation, and to take from their side guarantees, that is, hostages and a diplomatic agent, who shall be collected together under charge of the competent minister in this city (Constantinople) protected of God, and shall enjoy all imperial benefits and gifts suitable for the emperor to bestow.

De administrando imperio (Chapter 4)

Of the Pechenegs and Russians and Turks

So long as the emperor of the Romans is at peace with the Pechenegs, neither Russians nor Turks can come upon the Roman dominions by force or arms, nor can they exact from the Romans large and inflated sums in money and goods as the price of peace, for they fear the strength of this nation which the emperor can turn against them while they are campaigning against the Romans. For the Pechenegs, if they are leagued in friendship with the emperor and won over by him through letters and gifts, can easily come upon the country both of the Russians and of the Turks, and enslave their women and children and ravage their country.

Source: Moravcsik, Gyula, ed. *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio.* Translated by Romilly J. H. Jenkins. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1967, Chapters 1 and 4, pp. 49–51. Reprinted with permission.

23. ROBERT THE MONK'S ACCOUNT OF THE COUNCIL OF CLERMONT AND POPE URBAN II'S CALL FOR CHRISTIANS TO TAKE UP THE CROSS (1095)

At the Council of Clermont in France in 1095, Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099) issued a challenge to all Christians of Western Europe to fight a Holy War against the infidels who had taken possession of the holy city of Jerusalem. All who joined in this sacred struggle received the promise that all their debts and sins would be forgiven and eternal salvation would be their ultimate reward. Pope Urban also saw this as a rare opportunity not only to bring order to a chaotic Europe by bringing all warfare under the control of the church but also to bring unity to the Eastern and Western churches (under papal control, of course!). The First Crusade had begun. In the document below, Robert the Monk's (d. 1122) contemporary record of the First Crusade, Pope Urban encourages all Christians to take up the cross, stressing the worldly and spiritual rewards to be gained. Notice Pope Urban's emphasis on Jerusalem, which certainly was not Emperor Alexius's (r. 1081–1118) original intention; this difference in emphasis would cause serious conflict between the Byzantine Empire and the Latin West.

Jerusalem is the center of the Earth. It is a land more fruitful than any other, almost another Earthly Paradise. Christ dignified it with his arrival, honored it with his words and his passion (the crucifixion), and his burial. Yet this royal city at the center of the world is now help captive by her enemies and enslaved by those who know nothing of the ways of the people of God. So she begs to be free, and prays constantly for you to come to her aid. Indeed it is your help she desperately seeks because God has granted you glory in war above all other nations, as I said earlier. So seize on this road to obtain the forgiveness of your sins, sure in the eternal glory of the Heavenly Kingdom.

When Pope Urban had eloquently spoken these words and many other things of the same kind, all present were so moved that they as if one voice shouted "God wills

it! God wills it!" When the holy Pope heard this, he raised his eyes to Heaven, and thanked God.

Source: Sweetenham, Carol, trans. *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: Crusade Texts in Translation*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005, Book 1, Chapter 2, p. 81. Reprinted with permission from Taylor & Francis Group, Informa UK Limited.

24. ROBERT THE MONK'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FOUNDATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE (12TH CENTURY)

Following his defeat of his rival Licinius (r. 308–324 CE), ruler of the Eastern Empire, in 324 CE, Constantine (r. 306–337 CE), now sole ruler of the Roman Empire, was determined to build a new capital, one that reflected his newly acquired fame and glory and that would be a lasting tribute to the Christian God. At this time, Rome, the eternal city, with its strong pagan tradition and its great distance from the empire's northern and eastern frontiers, had long been considered an unsuitable capital. Constantine's eyes finally fell on the old Greek city of Byzantium. Constantine rebuilt it, naming it Constantinople or city of Constantine; the city became the new Rome, equal to the ancient capital. Constantine chose the site primarily for its superior strategic location; it was protected all around by natural barriers, forming a bridge between Europe and Asia by land as well as sea, and it provided access to the wealthy eastern provinces. In the following passage from his history of the First Crusade, Robert the Monk (d. 1122) attributes Constantine's choice to a supernatural vision, seeing Constantine's decision not driven as much by his practical judgment as by the fulfillment of God's will.

This was the vision, completely clear, of Constantine.

We read in a history somewhere that the Roman Emperor Constantine, asleep one night in the city known as Byzantium, saw a vision which appeared to him as follows. A certain old woman, without clothes and bound round with a kind of belt, came to him and sought help from his riches, she demanded clothes to wear, a covering to shield her, and a gift of food to eat; she promised him that he would shortly become king, and would without doubt give her what she asked. And thus the vision disappeared. Constantine the omnipotent, excited by the dream and turning over in his mind what the vision might mean, then realized through divine inspiration that it was the very city in which he found himself seeking help and begging to be put in better state. And so he built it up from the foundations and called it Constantinople after himself. He made it equal to Rome in the height of its walls and the noble structure of its buildings, making it sublime in equal glory and earthly distinction; just as Rome is the capital of the West, thus Constantinople should be the capital of the Orient. It is located between the Adriatic Sea and the sea which is now known as the Arm of St. George, above which the walls of the city are located. This city is richer than all others through its fertile land and all the trade of mercantile riches. Let none doubt that it was founded on divine will—God saw what was to come, which we now see

come to pass. For if such a city had not been founded, where would the Christianity of the East have found a refuge? The most sacred relics of the holy prophets, the Apostles and the innumerable holy martyrs now have a home there, brought from the domain of the pagans. Asia and Africa were once Christian possessions; they are now subject to the filthy rituals of the Gentiles. For that reason the royal city of Constantinople was set up such that, as we said above, it might form a royal and unshakable safe home for the holy relics. And thus it should be equal to Rome in the dignity of what it protects and the excellence of its royal dignity, except that Rome is elevated by the presence of the Pope and is thus head and chief of all Christendom (*note that Robert, a Western monk, is asserting papal authority over both the Western and Eastern churches*).

Source: Sweetenham, Carol. *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: Crusade Texts in Translation.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005, Book 2, Chapter 20, pp. 101–02. Reprinted with permission from Taylor & Francis Group, Informa UK Limited.

25. POPE INNOCENT III'S LETTER TO THE LEADERS OF THE FOURTH CRUSADE FOLLOWING THEIR CAPTURE OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1204)

In 1199, Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216) initiated the Fourth Crusade, instructing Western crusaders to march through Egypt to free Jerusalem from Islamic control and forbidding any attacks on Christian territory. Hiring the Venetians to transport them to the Holy Land, the crusaders were unable to pay, so some historians have suggested that the Venetians forced the crusaders to help them eliminate trading rivals. They first, in spite of the pope's warning, captured the Christian city of Zara in Dalmatia (modern-day Yugoslavia), massacring and looting the citizens. The city was under the control of the king of Hungary, who had himself taken the cross. From there, the crusaders sailed to Constantinople, capturing it in 1204. The crusaders massacred its inhabitants and caused great destruction, stealing anything they could get their hands on, including some of the most important holy relics in all of Christendom. The Venetians and Crusaders then set up a Latin empire that lasted until 1261, delivering a blow to Byzantium from which it would never recover and making a voluntary union between the Eastern and Western churches virtually impossible. Upon hearing the news, the pope was furious but eventually accepted the situation. Following is his letter to the crusaders informing them of the irreversible harm they had caused all Christians by their irresponsible actions.

How, indeed is the Greek church to be brought back into agreement with the Church of Rome when she has been attacked with so many troubles and persecutions that she sees in the Latins only an example of wickedness and the works of darkness, so that she now, and with good reason, hates the Latins more than dogs? As for those who were supposed to be seeking ends of Jesus Christ, not their own ends, whose swords, which they were supposed to use against pages, are now dripping with Christian blood—they have spared neither age nor sex. Not satisfied with breaking open

imperial treasury and plundering the good of princes and lesser men, they also laid their hands on the treasures of the churches, and what is more serious, on their very possessions. The have even ripped silver plates from the altars and have hacked them to pieces among themselves. The violated the holy places and have carried off crosses and relics . . .

Furthermore, what excuse can we give to call upon the other Western peoples for aid to the Holy Land and assistance to the Empire of Constantinople? When the Crusaders, having given their holy mission, return to their homes with the Church's blessing; when those who plundered the aforesaid Empire turn back and come with their spoils, free of guilt; will not people then suspect that these things have happened, not because of the crime involved, but because of your deed? Let the Lord's word not be silent in your mouth. Be not like a dumb dog, unable to bark. Rather, let them speak these things publicly, let them protest before everyone, so that the more they blame you before God and on God's account, the more they will find you simply negligent. As for pardoning the Venetian people being falsely accepted by you, against the rules of the Church, we have nothing to say . . .

Source: Brundage, James A., trans. *The Crusades, a Documentary Survey.* Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1962, p. 209. Reprinted with permission.

26. VENETIAN DOGE ANDREA DANDOLO DESCRIBES THE MIRACULOUS POWER OF THE VIRGIN HODEGETRIA ICON (1343)

The icon of the Virgin Hodegetria (She Who Leads the Way) was considered the special protector of the city of Constantinople. The icon depicts the Theotokos (Mother of God) holding the Christ Child and pointing to him. Legends from the 11th century report that Saint Luke painted the icon, although the image itself probably dates from the fifth century. The Virgin Hodegetria is first mentioned in the 10th century, and her miraculous powers are mentioned by numerous historians and chroniclers; allegedly, the icon had the ability to restore sight to the blind and to save the city from destruction by enemy invaders. The icon is believed to have been destroyed in 1453 when the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople.

One of the icon's many miracles is recorded by the Venetian Doge Andrea Dandolo (1306–1354) in his chronicle relating the miraculous role the icon played during the siege of Constantinople by the Saracens during the rule of Leo the Isaurian (ca. 717–741 CE). Dandolo also reports how the icon received the name of Hodegetria.

The emperor Leo the Isaurian started to rule in the year 718 in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the following year the Constantinopolitans were again under heavy siege by the Saracens, who came from Egypt and Palestine. Then, upon taking from the monastery of the Virgin the icon, which was painted by Luke while she was still alive, they carried it in a procession, praying in order that she might help in

the dangers, and to this day the same act is performed. When [the icon was] placed on the waves, immediately a storm arose that either sank or destroyed all the ships of the Saracens. The icon acquired the name Hodegetria, meaning "she who leads the way," when she appeared to two blind men and led them to the church (Hodegon monastery), where they regained their sight.

Source: Pentcheva, Bissera V., trans. *The Chronicle of Adnrea Dandolo* in *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, p. 58. Reprinted with permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press.

27. AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. CATHERINE (MID-14TH CENTURY)

The monastery of Saint Catherine, located at the foot of Mount Sinai on the Sinai Peninsula, is the oldest working monastery in the world. It was named after Saint Catherine of Alexandria, who was martyred in the third century. According to legend, the saint's remains were transported to Mount Sinai by angels. The monastery's origins date back to at least the fourth century when Saint Helena (ca. 250–ca. 330 CE) constructed a small chapel to commemorate the place where Moses witnessed the burning bush and stood in the presence of God. This chapel was described by the Spanish pilgrim Egeria during her travels there in the late fourth century. In the sixth century, Justinian I (r. 527–565 CE) built a fortified monastery enclosing the chapel of the burning bush. In the early ninth century, monks allegedly found Saint Catherine's remains and transported them back to the monastery, enshrining them in a silver sarcophagus next to the altar of Justinian's basilica. Escaping the Iconoclastic purge of the Byzantine rulers Leo III (r. 717–741 CE) and Constantine V (r. 741–775 CE), probably due to the monastery's remote location and an alleged letter of protection from the prophet Mohammad (d. 632 CE), the monastery today is renowned for one of the greatest and oldest collections of icons and a world-famous library second only to the Vatican collection. The library contains exquisite codices and manuscripts; the library's most prized possession is the Syriac Sinaiticus, which gives extraordinary insight into the origins of the New Testament. In the following account from the 14th century, attributed to an Englishman named Sir John Mandeville, the author describes the monastery and the venerated relics of St. Catherine displayed in his presence.

And the Mount of Sinai is clept the Desert of Sin, that is for to say, the bush burning; because there Moses saw our Lord God many times in the form of fire burning upon that hill, and also in a bush burning, and spake to him. And that was at the foot of the hill. There is an abbey of monks, well builded and well closed with gates of iron for dread of the wild beasts; and the monks be Arabians or men of Greece. And there [is] a great convent, and all they be as hermits, and they drink no wine, but if it be on principal feasts; and they be full devout men, and live poorly and simply with joutes and with dates, and they do great abstinence and penances.

There is the Church of Saint Catherine, in which be many lamps burning; for they have of oil of olives enough, both for to burn in their lamps and to eat also. And that plenty have they by the miracle of God; for the ravens and the crows and the choughs and other fowls of the country assemble them there every year once, and fly thither as in pilgrimage; and everych of them bringeth a branch of the bays or of olive in their beaks instead of offering, and leave them there; of the which the monks make great plenty of oil. And this is a great marvel. And sith that fowls that have no kindly wit or reason go thither to seek that glorious Virgin, well more ought men then to seek her, and to worship her.

Also behind the altar of that church is the place where Moses saw our Lord God in a burning bush. And when the monks enter into that place, they do off both hosen and shoon or boots always, because that our Lord said to Moses, Do off thy hosen and thy shoon, for the place that thou standest on is land holy and blessed. And the monks clepe that place Dozoleel, that is to say, the shadow of God. And beside the high altar, three degrees of height is the fertre of alabaster, where the bones of Saint Catherine lie. And the prelate of the monks sheweth the relics to the pilgrims, and with an instrument of silver he froteth the bones; and then there goeth out a little oil, as though it were a manner sweating, that is neither like to oil ne to balm, but it is full sweet of smell; and of that they give a little to the pilgrims, for there goeth out but little quantity of the liquor. And after that they shew the head of Saint Catherine, and the cloth that she was wrapped in, that is yet all bloody; and in that same cloth so wrapped, the angels bare her body to the Mount Sinai, and there they buried her with it. And then they shew the bush, that burned and wasted nought, in the which our Lord spake to Moses, and other relics enough.

Source: Pollard, A. W., ed. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. The version of the Cotton Manuscript in modern spelling. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1900, pp. 40–41.

28. NICOLO BARBARO'S ACCOUNT OF THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE FULFILLMENT OF CONSTANTINE'S PROPHECIES (1453)

Since Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) established Constantinople in 330 CE as the capital of the Byzantine Empire, emperors extended their power over three continents—Africa, Europe, and Asia. But years of fighting with numerous invaders and internal political weakness took its toll on the empire. In the eighth century, it lost the rich provinces of Egypt and Syria to Islamic armies. At the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, after the Byzantine army suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Seljuk Turks, it lost all its possessions in Asia Minor. In 1204, during the Fourth Crusade, Western knights captured the city of Constantinople, causing immense destruction, setting up a Latin government, creating an irreversible break between the Eastern and Western churches, and delivering a blow to the Byzantine Empire that it never recovered from. By 1453, when the Ottoman Turks under the conqueror Mahomet II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481) besieged

and captured the city of Constantinople, the city was almost all that remained of the once vast and mighty Byzantine Empire. Nicolo Barbaro in his eyewitness account, The Diary of the Siege of Constantinople, *records during the final siege of the city that its destruction was foretold by ancient prophecies uttered by Constantine the Great. Nicolo now saw the fulfillment of these prophecies, concluding that God had abandoned Constantinople and its destruction was close at hand.*

On the twenty-ninth of May, the last day of the siege, our Lord God decided, to the sorrow of the Greeks, that he was willing for the city to fall on this day into the hands of Mahomet Bey the Turk son of Murat, after the fashion and in the manner described below; and also our eternal God was willing to make this decision in order to fulfil all the ancient prophecies, particularly the first prophecy made by Saint Constantine, who is on horseback on a column by the Church of Saint Sophia of this city, prophesying with his hand and saying, "From this direction will come the one will undo me," pointing to Anatolia, that is Turkey. Another prophecy which he made was that when there should be an Emperor called Constantine son of Helen, under his rule Constantinople would be lost (Constantine XI Palaeologus 1449–1453), and there was another prophecy that when the moon should give a sign in the sky, within a few days the Turks would have Constantinople. All these three prophecies had come to pass, seeing that the Turks had passed into Greece, there was an Emperor called Constantine son of Helen, and the moon had given a sign in the sky, so that God had determined to come to this decision against the Christians and particularly against the Empire of Constantinople.

Source: Barbaro, Nicolo. *Diary of the Siege of Constantinople 1453*. Translated by J. R. Jones. New York: Exposition Press, 1969, pp. 61–62.

Appendix: Dynasties of the Byzantine Empire

Usurpers are indicated by *italics*.

Constantinian Dynasty (306–361)
Constantine the Great (306–337), sole emperor (323–337)
Constans I (337–350)
Constantine II (337–340)
Constantius II (337–361), sole emperor (353–361)
Julian (361–363)

Rule of Jovian (363–364)

Valentinian Dynasty (364–378)
Valentinian I (364–375)
Valens (364–378)

Theodosian Dynasty (379–518)
Theodosius I, the Great (379–390)
Arcadius (395–408)
Theodosius II (408–450)
Marcian (450–457)
Leo I (457–474)
Zeno (474–491)
Anastasius (491–518)

Dynasty of Justinian (518–602)
Justin I (518–527)
Justinian I (527–565)
Justin II (565–578)
Tiberius I Constantine (578–582)
Maurice (582–602)
Phocas (usurper) (602–610)

Dynasty of Heraclius (610–695, 705–717)
Heraclius (610–641)
Constantine III and Heraclonas (641–643)
Constans II (642–668)
Constantine IV Pogonatus (668–685)
Justinian II Rhinotmète (685–695)
Leontius (usurper) (695–698)
Tiberius II (usurper) (698–705)
Justinian II (for the second time) (705–711)
Philippicus (711–713)
Anastasius II (713–716)
Theodosius III (716–717)

Isaurian Dynasty (Syrian) (717–802, 811–867)
Leo III (717–740)
Constantine V Copronymus (740–775)
Leo IV (775–780)
Constantine VI (780–797)
Irene (797–802)
Nicephorus I (usurper) (802–811)
Stauracius (811)
Michael I Rangabe (811–813)
Leo V, the Armenian (813–820)
Michael II, the Stammerer (820–829)
Theophilus (829–842)
Michael III, the Drunkard (842–867)

Macedonian Dynasty (877–1067)
Basil I (877–886)
Leo the VI, the Wise (886–912)
Alexander (912–913)
Constantine VII (913–959) associated with Romanus I Lecapenus (919–944)
Romanus I Lepecanus (usurper) (919–944)
Romanus II (959–963)
Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969)
John I Tzimisces (969–976)
Basil II, the Bulgar Slayer (976–1025)
Constantine VIII (1020–1028)
Zoe (1028–1000), associated with her various husbands:
Romanus III Argyrus (1028–1034)
Michael IV le Paphlagonian (1034–1041)
Michel V (nephew of Michael IV; adopted by Zoe) (1041–1042)
Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1054)

Theodora (1054–1056)
Michael VI Stratiotikos (1056–1067)

Dynasties of the Ducas and the Comneni (1059–1185)
Isaac I Comnenus (1067–1009)
Constantine X Doucas (1009–1067)
Romanus IV Diogenes (1067–1071)
Michael VII Doucas (1071–1078)
Nicephorus III Botaneiates (usurper) (1078–1081)
Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118)
John II Comnenus (1118–1143)
Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180
Alexius II Comnenus (1180–1183)
Andronicus I Comnenus (1183–1185)

Dynasty of the Angeli (1185–1204)
Isaac II (1185–1195)
Alexius III (1195–1203)
Isaac II (for the second time) (associated with his son)
Alexius IV (1203–1204)

Latin Emperors of Constantinople (1204–1261)
Baldwin I of Flanders (1204–1205)
Henry of Flanders (1206–1216)
Peter of Courtenay (1217)
Yolande (1217–1219)
Robert II of Courtenay (1221–1228)
Baldwin II (1228–1261); assisted John of Brienne as regent (1229–1237), sole emperor (1240–1261)

Greek Emperors of Nicaea (1204–1259)
Theodore Lascaris (1204–1222)
John III Vatatzes (1222–1254)
Théodore II Lascaris (1254–1258)
John V Lascaris (1258–1259)
Michael VIII Palaeologus (usurper) (1259–1261) (captured Constantinople in 1261 and reunited the then-remaining Byzantine Empire and established the dynasty of the Paleologi)

Dynasty of the Paleologi (1261–1453)
Michael VIII (1261–1282)
Andronicus II (1282–1328, associated with son Michael IX (1295–1320)
Andronicus III (1328–1341)

John V (1341–1376)
John VI Cantacuzenas (usurper) (1341–1355)
Andronicus IV (son of John V) (1376–1379)
John V (for the second time) (1379–1391)
John VII (son of Andronicus IV) (usurper) (14 April–September 1390)
Manuel II (1391–1425)
John VIII (1426–1448)
Constantine XI Dragases (1448–1453)

Greek Despots of Mistra (1348–1383)
Manuel Cantacuzenus (1348–1380)
Matthew Cantacuzenus (1380–1383)

Glossary

Aedicule: A small shrine intended to frame, shelter, and honor a holy object, fulfilling a similar function to a tabernacle.

Amphitheater: Open oval or circular building used for entertainment, performances, and sports.

Apse: In Byzantine church architecture, it is a semicircular or polygonal section of the sanctuary at the liturgical east end beyond the altar.

Augusta: A title used for the empresses of the Roman and Byzantine Empires.

Augustus: An ancient Roman title for senior emperor.

Autocephalous (of a church): Having its own head or chief bishop, though in communion with other Orthodox churches.

Autokrator: Meaning "sole ruler," this is the approximate Greek equivalent of imperator/emperor.

Basileus: Greek word for "emperor."

Book of the Eparch/Perfect: Tenth-century manual containing regulations for guild associations in Constantinople.

Boyars: Members of the ruling nobility in medieval Russia and some other Slavic countries, such as Bulgaria.

Buttress: An architectural structure built against a counterfort or projecting from a wall that serves to support or reinforce the wall.

Caesar: Imperial title.

Christ Pantokrator: "Almighty Christ"—in Christian iconography, this is a specific depiction of Christ.

Chrysobull: An official public document or decree issued by the emperors of the Byzantine Empire, with an authenticating gold stamp.

Church Fathers: A group of theologians and church authors who lived during the first centuries of Christianity and exerted great influence on the church. Among them are Tertullian, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom.

Circus: The Roman Circus, the theater, and the amphitheater were the most important buildings in the cities for public entertainment in the Roman Empire.

Codex: An early form of book, made of sheets of handwritten paper or parchment, and bound with thick covers; codices gradually replaced wooden writing tablets and scrolls.

Colonnade: A sequence of columns placed in and around buildings.

Copts: An ethno-religious group that forms the largest Christian community in both Egypt and the Middle East.

Cupola: A dome-shaped or quadrilateral-shaped ornamental structure located on top of a larger roof or dome, often used as a lookout or to admit light and provide ventilation.

Cyrillic Alphabet: A system developed in the 9th–10th century CE for Slavic-speaking peoples of the Eastern Orthodox faith.

Czar: Slavic word for emperor.

Decurion: A member of a city senate in the Roman Empire.

Deisis (Supplication): An artistic rendition of Jesus flanked by the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. Referred to as the Megali Deisis when Archangels, Apostles, and Saints are also depicted.

Demarch: A ruler or a chief magistrate of a deme.

Doge: For about a thousand years, the chief magistrate and leader of the Most Serene Republic of Venice.

Dogma: Official teachings about faith, as stated by the Ecumenical Synods, the truth of which is considered to have absolute authority. All the basic beliefs of a religion.

Drum: A hemispherical vault resting on a cylindrical or polygonal drum. Widely used in Christian church architecture.

Eparch: Byzantine government official from the 6th to the 11th century entrusted with the authority to maintain public order and safety in Constantinople.

Equal to the Apostles: An honorary title given to saints such as Saint Constantine and Saints Cyril and Methodius for their missionary work in the church.

Forum: Public space in the middle of a Roman city.

Fresco: A type of wall painting. The term comes from the Italian word for fresh because plaster is applied to the walls while still wet.

Greek Cross: A cross with arms of equal length.

Guild: Associations of people engaged in the same trade or business.

Guilding: Art of applying a thin layer of gold or something simulating gold to a surface.

Imperator: An absolute or supreme ruler.

Indiction: Tax collection cycle.

Khagan/Khan: A title of imperial rank in the Turkic and Mongolian languages equal to the status of emperor; used by various ethnicities.

Khaganate: An empire or a political entity ruled by a khan or khagan.

Laity: Members of the church who are not ordained to the priesthood.

Limestone: Contains variable amounts of silica in the form of chert or flint, as well as varying amounts of clay, silt, and sand as disseminations, nodules, or layers within the rock.

Logos: A symbol for Christ, the word incarnate, or "word made Flesh," which is also called "the Word of God."

Mausoleum: A building constructed as a monument enclosing the burial chamber of a deceased person.

Moat: A ditch around a castle filled with water.

Mosaic: Art of decoration with small pieces of colored glass, stone, or other material.

Novel: Imperial proclamation.

Opus sectile: An art technique popularized in Rome where materials were cut and inlaid into walls and floors to make a picture or pattern.

Panel or Slab: Usually of marble and often decorated with reliefs. Used to divide the nave of a church off from the sanctuary, or aisles, as they were placed in between the mullions of the chancel screen.

Paroikoi: Serfs.

Patriarch: The highest prelate in the Orthodox Church; today there are eight Orthodox prelates called patriarchs.

Patriarchate: The office and jurisdiction of a patriarch.

Patron Saint: A saint chosen by a group, nation, or organization to be their special advocate, guardian, and protector.

Pilgrimage Shrine: A sacred place where believers pay respects; it is usually associated with sites of great religious significance (e.g., Holy Land, Mount Athos, etc.).

Porphyrogenitus/a: "Born in purple"—children born to a reigning emperor, or a special member of the imperial family.

Portico: Porch leading to the entrance of a building, or extended as a colonnade, with a roof structure over a walkway supported by columns or enclosed by walls.

Relics: Remains from the body of a saint or even a saint's possessions, such as clothes or vestments; relics are honored and venerated by all Orthodox Christians.

Rotunda: Building with a circular ground plan, often covered by a dome.

Sclavini: A name applied to Slavic tribes that settled the Balkans in the early Middle Ages.

Sclaviniae: A term for settlements (provinces) inhabited by Slavic groups that were initially independent and out of Byzantine control.

See: The official "seat" or city capital where a bishop resides; hence, the territory of his entire jurisdiction may be called his see.

Skeuophylax: A sacristan in charge of sacred objects.

Temple: A structure reserved for religious or spiritual activities, such as prayer and sacrifice, or analogous rites.

Terracotta: A hard, fired clay, brownish-red in color when unglazed, used as a material in architecture and for sculpture.

Tetrarch: One of the four rulers in a tetrarchy.

Tetrarchy: Rule of four established by Emperor Diocletian.

Theotokos: "Mother of God," or Virgin Mary.

Three Hierarchs: The Orthodox Church considers in particular three bishops (hierarches) of the church as the most important teachers and fathers who contributed to the development and the spiritual growth of the church. They are Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, and Saint John Chrysostom.

Tribute: Payment given to stop or prevent military actions and money given to imperial treasury as a tax.

Triumphal Arch: A structure in the shape of a monumental archway, in theory built to celebrate a victory in war but actually used to celebrate a ruler.

Typikon: A liturgical book that contains instructions about the order of the various church services and ceremonies in the form of a calendar.

Vault: An architectural term for an arched form used to provide a space with a ceiling or roof; the parts of a vault exert a thrust that requires a counter resistance.

Vespers: An important service of the Orthodox Church, held in the evening, and comprising mainly a Thanksgiving prayer for the closing day and a welcome of the new day to come the following morning. It is often conducted on the eve of an important holiday.

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